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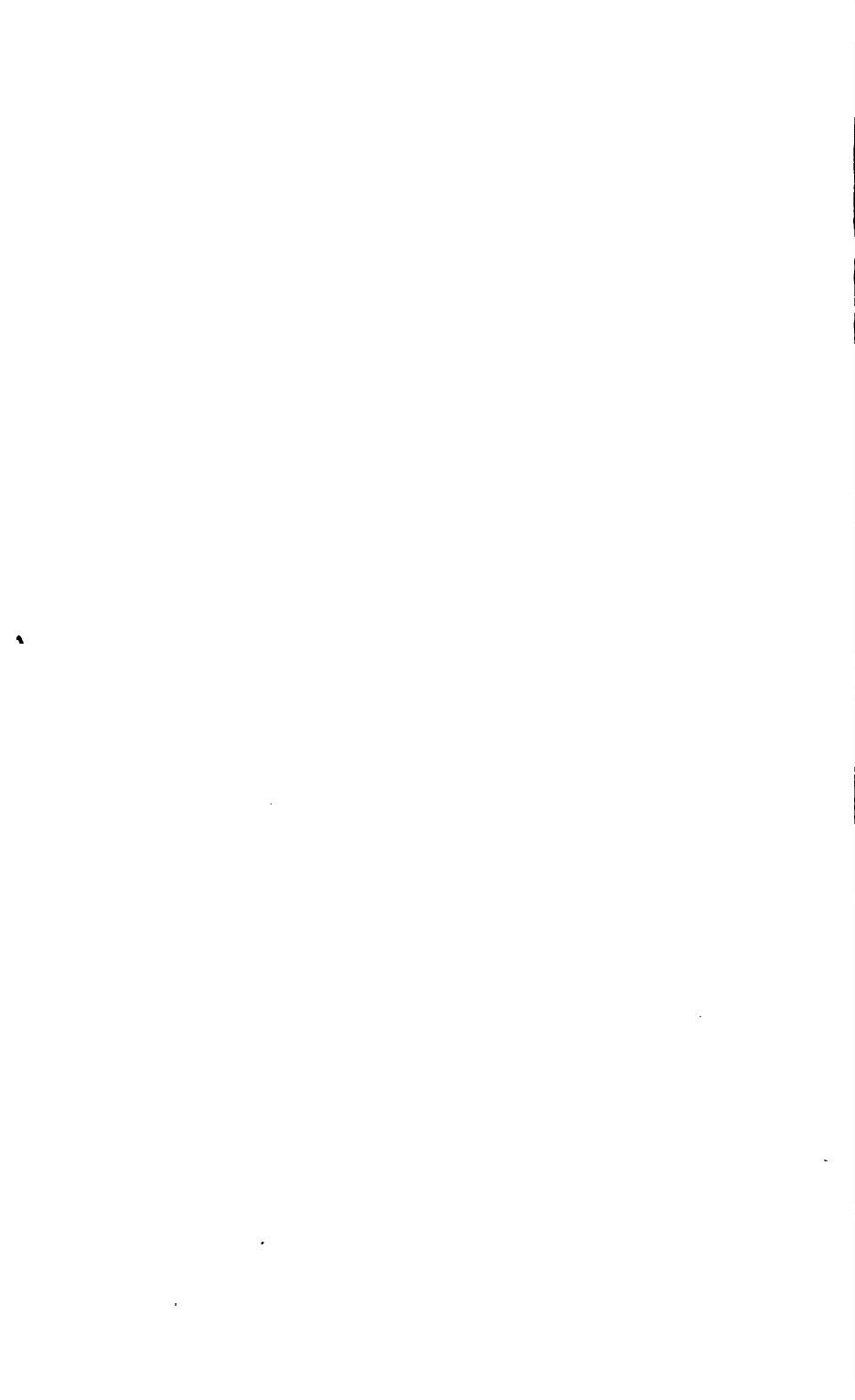


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Widow of Col. James Warren Sever
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER 1882.

Thicker than Water.

BY JAMES PAYN, AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' 'HIGH SPIRITS,' &c.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. BECKETT.

IT is two o'clock in the July afternoon, and on what the majority of Londoners, in spite of Geronimo's opinion to the contrary, consider the pleasantest day in the week, because it is a half-holiday. Geronimo's objection to Saturday was founded, the poet tells us, on the prolonged wear of his shirt; but to the city toiler that is a small objection; indeed the greatest of all Londoners, and one who worked the hardest (though not, it is true, unless he was obliged), has left it on record, through his biographer, that he did not like clean linen.

Hyde Park is crowded with pleasure-seekers, but the Row is empty. The Upper Ten Thousand have gone home to lunch, the Over Two Millions have just dined. Beside the mile-long garden that extends from the Marble Arch to Apsley House, the 'swart mechanic' lounges pipe in mouth admiringly; he gazes at the glowing parterres of wondrous shape and hue, and wonders how 'them colour beds' are made, and (especially) who pays for them. He thinks how his Missis and the kids would enjoy the spectacle, and is half-inclined to fetch them; but upon reflection, and finding his mouth a little dry, considers the morrow better adapted for their recreation, and, crossing to the other side of the road, drops into the public-house in the mews. As he does so, he

bestows, perhaps, a glance at the stately pile at its corner, and expresses an opinion, mingled with tobacco juice, that 'the cove as lives there must have a sight of money'—in which he is quite correct.

Of all the mansions in Park Lane, albeit there are some, though not many, larger, Beckett House gives the strongest impression to the passer-by not only of wealth, but, what is a very different thing (and much better), the possession of an abundance of ready money. Just as on illumination nights we see the lines of some public edifice picked out with fire, so all the summer long the balconies of Beckett House show, tier on tier, their glowing lines of flowers. Under the large portico there is a miniature jungle of tropical foliage, and when at night the opened door gives a glimpse of the interior to the passing Peri, it seems to her an Eden indeed.

Nor even in winter does this shrine of Flora lack its gifts, for in the centre and on either wing are great conservatories, to which 'the time of roses' is but a poetic figment, and May (for once) is happy in December's arms.

Mrs. Beckett, the owner of this palace, has a passion for flowers, which her wealth enables her to indulge to the full; nor is this the only proof of her good taste. She had once a handle to her name, but laid it aside by an act of voluntary abnegation. Emperors and others have done the like before her, but a woman—never. Her first husband was Sir Robert Orr, a city knight, who left her an immense jointure and 'her ladyship.' He had never been remarkable for personal beauty, and unless in the sense of years—he was three times her age—could hardly have been called accomplished. It was a marriage of convenience; but the old man had been kind to her in life and death, and she respected his memory. When she married her second husband, John Beckett, the railway engineer, she dropped her 'ladyship'; Sir Robert had been intensely proud of the title, and she felt that it belonged to him. The law, of course, would have decided as much, but she might have retained it by courtesy. She was not a woman to parade her sentiments, and, having some sense of humour, was wont to account for this act of self-sacrifice upon moral grounds; she did not think it respectable, she said, to figure with her husband in the 'Morning Post' as Mr. Beckett and Lady Orr; she left that suspicious anomaly for the wives of bishops.

John Beckett had been a rich man, though he could not have measured purses with Sir Robert, and he had ten times his wits.

He had not wasted them much on building bridges or hollowing tunnels out of the 'too solid earth;' he left such enduring monuments to scientific theorists, and applied the great powers of his mind—he called them without the faintest consciousness of self-satire its 'grasp'—to contracts; mostly in connection with coal. He took the same practical view of matrimony, which poor Lady Orr had never guessed, and for her part had wedded her second husband for love. It was unintelligible to her that a man of so much wealth should pant for more; but he did so to his last breath. If he could have carried all his money (and hers) away with him—'to melt,' or 'to begin the next world with'—he would have done it and left her penniless. As it was, he died suddenly—killed by a fall from his horse below her very windows—and intestate. Even when his scarce breathing body was lying in an upstairs chamber, and she tending it with all wifely solicitude, she could not stifle a sense of coming enfranchisement after twenty-five years of slavery, or the consciousness that her Sir Robert had been the better man of the two.

A woman of experience at least, if not of wisdom, was the present mistress of Beckett House; with strong passions, but with a not ungenerous heart; outspoken from the knowledge of her 'great possessions,' perhaps, as much as from natural frankness; a warm friend and not a very bitter enemy; and at the bottom of it all with a certain simplicity of character, of which her love for flowers was an example. She had loved them as Kitty Conway, the country doctor's daughter, when violets instead of camellias had been 'her only wear,' sweet-peas and wallflowers the choicest ornaments of her little garden, and Park Lane to her unsophisticated mind like other lanes. 'Fat, fair, and forty,' she was wont to call herself at the date this story opens, and it was the truth; but not the whole truth. Fat she was and fair she was, but she was within a few years of fifty. Of course she was admirably preserved; as the kings of old took infinite pains that their bodies after death should not decay, so women do their best for themselves in that way while still in the flesh; and Mrs. Beckett was as youthful as art and care could make her. In shadow and with the light behind her, persons of the other sex might have set her down as even less mature than she described herself to be. There would have been at least ten years' difference between their 'quotations'—as poor Sir Robert would have called them—and that of her tiring maid.

Five years she had had of gilded ease and freedom, since

drunken, greedy, hard John Beckett had occupied his marble hall in Kensal Green—Sir Robert had a similar edifice of his own in Highgate cemetery, for she had too much good taste to mix their dust—and on the whole she had enjoyed them. Far too well favoured by fortune, however, not to have her detractors, she was whispered by some to be by no means averse to a third experiment in matrimony. ‘There swam no goose so gray,’ they were wont to quote, and ‘There was luck in odd numbers.’ Gossips will say anything, and men delight in jokes against the fair sex. There is one about matrimony which was applied to the present case. A student of human nature once inquired of his grandmother (ætat. 80) at what age females ceased to experience the tender passion. ‘My dear boy,’ she answered, rather tartly, ‘you must ask somebody much older than I am.’ There was even a rumour, not old enough to be a legend, that Mrs. Beckett had once sounded her confidential man of business, Mr. Rennie, upon this subject. ‘As you consult me as a friend,’ he said—by which he meant gratuitously—‘my opinion, my dear madam, is not worth much; but as to the remarriage of widows—in cases where they have 30,000*l.* a year at their own disposal—I think it risky.’

Mrs. Beckett sighed, for she remembered that even when she was but twenty she had been married for her money. Still every man was not like John Beckett; and how nice Sir Robert must have been when he was young.

On the day on which our story opens, the widow was sitting in her drawing-room with a novel in her hand, on which, however, she was not bestowing that close regard, I do not say which such an agreeable description of literature has a right to expect, but even the commonest attention; her glance wandered with ill-concealed impatience over the top of her book to the gorgeous timepiece on the mantelpiece, the hands of which were travelling over gold and china towards two o’clock.

Suddenly her fair face flushed crimson; her eyes had met with another pair bound on the same identical errand; Miss Marvon, her young friend and ‘companion,’ was also watching the clock.

‘Do you want your lunch, Mary?’ inquired the lady of the house, with a very good imitation of a yawn.

‘Not at all, thank you, Mrs. Beckett,’ was the quiet reply, delivered in the gentlest and sweetest of tones. It was not her dependent position that gave honey to her speech; it was natural to Mary Marvon to be sweet and gentle to everybody, but espe-

cially to those who were kind to her; and Mrs. Beckett had been very kind. The jewels on the girl's shapely wrist, the lace about her dainty neck, the very dress which fitted her slight but graceful figure with such completeness, were all Mrs. Beckett's gifts. Nay, in her dark brown hair blushed a scarlet flower, which Mrs. Beckett in her characteristic admiration for it, had placed there with her own hands that morning as being the fittest setting for such a floral jewel. If anything were wanting to show how smooth and even was the social ground on which the two women stood, notwithstanding the conventional relation between them, it was found in the next words that Mrs. Beckett spoke. As a rule ladies do not think it worth while to excuse themselves to their hired companions for this or that, whereas our widow paid hers the compliment of telling a 'tarradiddle' or white lie, in order to explain her recent interest in the timepiece.

'I was thinking,' she said, 'what a want of originality and sense of appropriateness there must be in clockmakers, since they all represent the progress of Time by hands, as if he was an acrobat. If legs were too unpoetical or indelicate, they might at least use wings.'

'It is only with the exceptionally fortunate, however,' returned Mary, smiling, 'that Time moves on wings.'

'I doubt whether people are always the happier for that,' observed Mrs. Beckett.

'Perhaps not,' assented Mary. 'I should think those lives are the most enviable which are passed smoothly and equably, but not at eagle speed.'

'That was not quite what I had in my mind,' returned the widow, rising and looking thoughtfully through the open window. 'I was thinking that when Time seems to drag, because of our expectations, it is often better for us that it should drag on, and that they should remain without fulfilment. The secret of happiness in this world'—those three last words were mere garnish, and suited with her voice and manner no better than a flower made of a carrot or a turnip with some delicate entrée—'is not to expect, but to make the best of what we have—— Was not that the front door bell?'

The last observation was by no means uttered in the same philosophic tone as the rest, and a faint red suffused the widow's cheeks. The colour too came into Mary Marvon's face, which was, however, averted from her patroness, as she answered 'I think so.'

Then they remained silent. If they were listening for a step

upon the stair they must have been very sanguine, or else in possession of the gifts of Fine Ear in the fairy tale; for three-pile carpets are not good conductors of sound. If they could have seen what was going on below stairs they would have seen *this*: a young man of four-and-twenty or so, bright-eyed and fresh-complexioned, but with that subdued air which betokens dry humour rather than that of the sparkling kind, had been admitted by the hall porter, and introduced by the good offices of two tall footmen to the butler, Harris. This personage preceded him up the staircase with much solemnity, but on the landing paused, perceiving that the visitor was not following him.

‘All right, my man,’ said a cheerful voice from below, ‘I will be with you at the finish, but I really cannot go your pace.’

Then he came up three steps at a bound, just in time to be announced at the drawing-room door as ‘Mr. Sotheran.’

‘Oh, it’s you, is it, Charley?’ observed the widow in a tone of undisguised disappointment.

‘Well, yes, in default of a better it’s poor me. Were you expecting an hereditary prince or what?’

‘Lunch!’ said Mrs. Beckett, sharply.

Whether this was a reply to his question or an order to Harris seemed doubtful; but the butler took it in the latter sense.

‘It is served,’ he said, ‘me lady.’

The title he used seemed out of place; but the fact was, though Mrs. Beckett had voluntarily descended in the social scale, her servants had objected to that arrangement. The old ones had been permitted after her second marriage to address her by the old phrase, which they pretended they could not forget, while the new ones adopted it readily enough as giving importance to their office. Mrs. Beckett had made certain efforts to put a stop to it and with this very man—‘Remember I am not “my lady,” Harris.’

‘Very good, me lady—I mean ma’am—but having always been with persons of title, if you will please to remember, it is difficult, in your ladyship’s presence too’ (Harris was astute and would have made an excellent ambassador, except perhaps to the United States), ‘not to say “me lady.”’

And I think Mrs. Beckett rather liked a practice which reminded the world how much she had given up and from the noblest motives.

CHAPTER II.

A FRIEND OF THE HOUSE.

It was hard upon 'Charley' that his hostess had made it manifest she would have preferred to welcome somebody else ; but what he felt much more was, that Miss Marvon also received him with a similar lack of enthusiasm.

'You are early to-day,' she said, not indeed without a pleasant smile, but that belonged to her and could no more be dispensed with than the Austrian lip or the Caucasian nose by their hereditary wearers : 'I am afraid you are defrauding the revenue.'

'And the tax-payers,' added Mrs. Beckett, 'which is me.'

'And this it is to be in a government office!' exclaimed the young fellow, clasping his hands despairingly ; 'to rise—but only by ten pounds a year—with the lark, to work like a horse at a mill-wheel, and if one shares a half-holiday with the poorest, and gets away from one's house of toil upon a Saturday——'

'Come, take Mary's arm, sir,' interrupted the widow, 'and lead her downstairs—— No, my dear' (for Mary had modestly drawn back)—'I will not inflict myself upon him, and he hasn't the strength for it. The duties of the young gentlemen in the Probate Office are too overwhelming.'

'No one can say we have not the Will,' he began imploringly.

'Be quiet, sir ; you learn nothing but jokes there : Mary, I insist.'

Charley drew the young lady's arm within his own, and with a murmur, 'How cruel she is to me!' led the way to the dining-room.

From the above it may be gathered that, though she had behaved to him so scornfully, Mr. Charles Sotheran was by no means looked on with disfavour by the lady of the house ; and indeed she treated none of his sex with such familiarity. His mother was a clergyman's widow who had been her school friend, and to whom she was still the 'Kitty' of thirty years ago. She had promised her, when the boy came up to town, that Beckett House should be a home to him, and he came in and out of it, as he himself expressed it, like a cat for whom a hole has been cut in the door. It was pleasant to see the expression of the widow's eyes as she followed the pair downstairs ; a woman would have translated it at once. 'I intend these two young people to be one, and a very pretty pair they'll make.'

Flesh and blood, however, are not so easy to match as Dresden china, and though Mrs. Beckett couldn't see it, or rather would not, there was an obstacle to her good intentions. Though one of the young people was willing enough to meet her views, the other was not. A Scotch lady, whose daughter was recently married, was asked by an old friend whether she might congratulate her upon the event. 'Yes, yes,' she answered, 'upon the whole it is very satisfactory; it is true Jeannie hates her gudeman, but then there's always a something.' Mrs. Beckett took a similar view; she was aware that Mary Marvon had no love for Charley, but that circumstance did not deter her from pursuing her plan. When one has thirty thousand a-year the will is strong. There was 'always a something,' she said to herself, and though her *protégée* might feel no great affection for the young man at present, it would surely come in time. She knew from her own case that a marriage could be happy without much previous attachment on the lady's part; and, alas, could be unhappy *with* it. Mary Marvon did not hate her possible gudeman; on the contrary, she liked him very much, except when he showed symptoms of liking her too well, when she always put a stop to his advances. This state of affairs puzzled her patroness not a little. She would have suspected any other girl in Mary's position of 'looking a little higher' than at a clerk in the Probate Office, especially as she might have looked with success, for Miss Marvon's beauty and accomplishments, and, perhaps the consciousness that she was the friend and *protégée* of a millionaire without a relative, had already brought more than one eligible suitor to her feet; but Mrs. Beckett knew Mary too well to impute any such motive to her. The girl was of a proud and independent spirit, very susceptible to kindness, but of a nature that would have resented patronage from an archangel.

The wealth that surrounded her, notwithstanding that until the last few months she had been altogether unaccustomed to it, affected her no more than summer sunshine. She admitted to herself that it was pleasant and enjoyable enough, but if it came on to rain or even to snow, there were ways of passing one's existence within doors; she had resources of her own and was independent of the weather.

These, however, were not material resources; she had no patrimony, indeed she had never known either father or mother. The one had died six months before she saw the light, and the other when she was but an infant. Mrs. Sotheran, who had been

her mother's friend, had put her out to nurse, educated, and in a manner adopted her. But though she had shown her every kindness, and taken the utmost care in the selection of her home as regarded her well-being and comfort, that home had been a school. Though Mrs. Sotheran had often come to see her, she had never taken the orphan to her own house. The reason she had given for this was the state of her health, which indeed was delicate enough, the number of her family, and the calls upon her time made by an invalid husband; but the circumstance, taken in connection with the undoubted affection Mrs. Sotheran entertained for her, had been to Mary always unaccountable, and of late years, and since she had begun to think for herself, even mysterious. Mr. Sotheran had now long been dead, the children (of whom Charley was the youngest) had followed their father to the grave, and there was plenty of room in the cottage at Letcombe Dottrell for Mary Marvon. Yet she had never been invited thither.

Mary's school, although not a fashionable one, had been a high-class establishment. She had been well treated, well brought up, and had wanted for nothing. Mrs. Sotheran's explanation of the matter was that only a moderate sum had been placed in her hands as provision for the orphan, and that it had been Mrs. Marvon's dying wish that it should be expended so as to shield her daughter's youth from the pangs and pains of poverty (from which she had herself suffered bitterly), and to fit her as best might be for the battle of life. There was not enough for Mary to live upon, but there was enough to keep her in comfort till she could provide for her own maintenance. A few hundred pounds, as Mary vaguely understood, was all that was left to her when, at eighteen years of age, she had exchanged the modest comfort of Minerva Seminary, Harrowgate, for the splendours of Beckett House. To Mrs. Sotheran she owed—as she owed everything else—her present position, and for this she was more grateful to her than for all the rest. Not because it had opened for her the door of luxury, but for its introduction to one who had proved herself a gentle, considerate, and loving friend. Only on one subject had Mrs. Beckett and her young companion disagreed since the latter had come to share her home; namely, as regarded the young gentleman who was now escorting Mary down to luncheon. That Mr. Charles Sotheran was good-looking, good-tempered, agreeable, and very much a gentleman, Mary admitted; she had not a word to say against him except as a lover.

When Mrs. Beckett had gone on to hint that, though Charley's salary was small, and increased by no means 'by leaps and bounds,' a few strokes of her pen would soon alter all that, and that it would give her great pleasure to make them, Mary had demurely observed that Mrs. Beckett could not bestow her bounty upon a worthier object than Mr. Charles Sotheran; but that, so far as she (Mary) was concerned, he might have ten thousand a year but would still be unacceptable to her as a husband.

'Then you must be either a born-fool, Mary,' cried the widow, for the first time losing her temper with her young favourite, 'or you must have had your brain turned by romances.'

'As we were never allowed to read romances at Minerva House, my dear Mrs. Beckett,' returned Mary, cheerfully, but with a spot of red on each cheek, 'I suppose I must accept the former of your two alternatives.'

And she added a little courtesy by way of acknowledgment.

The courtesy, I think, went even further with Mrs. Beckett than her words; as a reproof, it affected her not one whit, for very rich people are rarely thin-skinned; but it showed the other's coolness and determination. Though the widow by no means gave up her object, from that moment she ceased to press it; she knew that, notwithstanding all the resources of science, there are some fruits which can never be brought on by forcing, and was compelled to believe that this was one of them. Henceforth she trusted to the sunshine and the showers: circumstance and opportunity.

As the three took their seats at the well-spread board, Charley nodded in his off-hand way to a vacant chair: 'What Banquo is sitting there?' he inquired.

'The Dornays promised to be here,' said Mrs. Beckett curtly.

'Oh, indeed, Banquo *and* Fleance! Then I've got one of *their* chairs.'

'Of course you have, sir; you were not expected though we are very glad to see you, and they *were*.'

'It is better to come to a feast when you are not asked,' observed Charley, with a philosophic air, 'than to be asked and not come.'

'And much better manners,' assented Mrs. Beckett, warmly. 'For my part I don't understand such conduct. Guests who come late to lunch are almost as bad as those who come late to dinner, and they are unpardonable. For my part I cannot understand why Society tolerates it.'

‘Still it is a sign of good position,’ remarked Charley, with a twinkle in his blue eyes. ‘It is only important people who venture to do it. They are titled and say to themselves, “Our host is an inferior person, so will not resent our rudeness,” or they are rich, and he owes them money and dares not.’

‘How can you be so foolish, Charley?’ said Mary reprovingly.

‘But, my dear Mary, it must be so,’ continued the young man gravely, ‘or why does the host wait for them to the inconvenience of his other guests, and though he knows the dinner is spoiling. For my part I always endure the extra half-hour with great patience for my host’s sake; for I say to myself, “His debts will be made easier to him on this account, or perhaps forgiven to him.” He can’t be so foolish or so slavish as to put up with such behaviour *for nothing*.’

‘Upon my word, I think Charley’s observations are very sensible,’ remarked Mrs. Beckett, grimly. ‘If people can get to a railway station in time, they can come in time for dinner. A quarter of an hour for the difference of clocks I do allow, but beyond that I would not wait for a Rothschild or a Royal Highness.’

‘Yes, but then you see you don’t owe Rothschild anything, Mrs. Beckett, and Royal Highnesses are always in time.’

‘Quite true,’ replied the hostess, with approval. ‘It is only your *parvenus* who take such liberties.’

‘Still there are such things as accidents,’ put in Mary, apologetically.

‘Accidents and offences,’ muttered Charley.

‘That is only another reason why nobody should wait,’ argued Mrs. Beckett; ‘I always say to persons who are so ill-bred as to be behind time, “I was sure that nothing but an accident would have detained you, and therefore we sat down.” Nobody but a madman, for example, would think of waiting for a doctor, who may be sent for at a moment’s notice. Harris, let those two dishes be taken out and kept warm.’

‘Justice tempered with mercy,’ observed Charley.

‘You are a very impudent young man,’ said the hostess smiling.

‘My dear Mrs. Beckett, you are altogether in error: it is native shyness; a thing that is often mistaken for sheer impertinence. I should not have dreamt of coming here to-day for example—and without an invitation—and especially at luncheon time’ (his hostess was hospitality itself, but here she smiled satirically), ‘if I had not had something to communicate to you of the last importance. I had news to-day from Letcombe Dottrell.’

'Good news I hope,' inquired Mrs. Beckett with interest. 'The last time I heard from your mother, she wrote in what was for her fairly good spirits.'

'She's lost them now, poor thing!' sighed the young man.

'But what has happened?' cried Mary. 'I heard from her only the other day. I am quite sure there's not much the matter, Charley, or, to do you justice, you would have told us long ago, instead of talking such nonsense.'

'That is the first civil word you have spoken to me, Mary; I'm so much obliged. It is so nice to hear you say you believe I have some natural affection. It puts one quite on a level with the brutes.'

'Will you tell us your news, sir?' broke in Mrs. Beckett, impatiently. 'Though we care nothing about *you*, you know how interested we both are in your dear mother. If you kept her in a state of suspense like this it would frighten her to death.'

'That's just what's the matter with her,' answered Charley. 'She *is* almost frightened to death, and no wonder. There's a giant at Letcombe Dottrell.'

'A what?' exclaimed both ladies simultaneously.

'A giant! eight feet, nine feet, ten feet—I don't know how many feet he is—who takes his seven-leagued strides about the parish quite composedly. And he don't live in a caravan either, as you may think, but at the hall itself. He is Mr. Beryl Paton's last *protégé*.'

'Oh, Charley, this is too absurd!' ejaculated Mrs. Beckett.

'It's as true as that I sit here, madam, eating apricot omelette. In addition to the Archæologist, the Metaphysician, and the Everythingarians, whom the squire has gathered about him, there is now—last, but by no means least—a Giant.'

'But why? There is nothing in being nine feet high, or even ten feet, to excite good Mr. Paton's sympathies. There must be merit, or at least presumed merit, or some pitiful misfortune to do that.'

'I don't know about that, Mrs. Beckett; perhaps he's an orphan giant; but there he *is*. Looking down the cottagers' chimneys as he takes his walks abroad; and, what is worse, into the bedroom windows at the rectory. Mr. Wells has complained about it, but the giant says he can't help it; it's his natural focus; he's not in the same plane with his fellow-creatures.'

'Why, Mr. Paton must be going mad!' exclaimed Mrs. Beckett.

‘Going?’ echoed the young man; ‘a less charitable person would have said gone.’

‘How shocking! Why, they say he owns half the county.’

‘Yes; that’s what of course makes the case so very distressing.’ Not a muscle of the speaker’s lips moved in the direction of a smile; nor did his hostess suspect the young man’s seriousness for an instant, but Mary shot at him a reproving glance. ‘Do you think it good taste,’ it said, or seemed to him to say, ‘to laugh at the weaknesses of so good a friend before her very face?’

‘But where on earth, Charley, did Mr. Paton first see the creature?’

‘Well, one would think by my mother’s description that he must have seen him always; that it was impossible for such a portent, being in the same hemisphere, to avoid observation. But, as a matter of fact, Mr. Paton found him in a caravan. You know his passion for the wonders of nature; and, attracted by some advertisement of a straight-haired negress, he came upon this prodigy. Of course he was charmed with him, and expressed his astonishment that so great a man should not only condescend to be exhibited with the African lady and for the same moderate charge of a penny, but should put up with a smaller type in their caravan advertisement. This roused the giant’s ambition; he struck for higher wages and a separate establishment, and on his master’s declining his terms, came straight away to Mr. Paton as to his natural adviser and protector. The excitement in the neighbourhood is prodigious, and you may imagine the sensation his arrival at the hall has created in the Happy Family itself.’

‘Oh dear! dear! I can indeed,’ gasped the widow, now fairly sobbing with laughter. ‘You have never seen Mr. Paton and the *ménage* at the hall, Mary, or you would know how to appreciate this. But of course this creature is not going to *stop*, Charley,—large as the house is, where can they put him?’

‘I am sure I don’t know; perhaps Mr. Paton will build a wing——’

At this moment, and while the air was rippling with mirth, the door opened, and in a voice as though he were introducing the guests to a funeral feast, the butler announced ‘Mr. Dornay and Mr. Ralph Dornay.’

CHAPTER III.

DEFIANCE.

THERE are few social crimes more exasperating—at all events to the *raconteur*—than the entrance of an outsider into a room where an excellent story is in course of narration. A Newfoundland dog coming out of the water and shaking himself over your light summer costume is nothing to it. It is an interruption not only unpardonable, but irreparable; let the newcomer be as anxious to mend matters as he may, the story is spoilt. Nothing can bring back ‘the splendour to the grass, the glory to the flower,’ or set Humpty Dumpty on his legs again. This should be borne in mind by all those folks who, having the intention to give intellectual pleasure (which few of them have), are wont to ask some of their friends to ‘dinner,’ and others ‘in the evening.’ The former portion of the company are at their ease; they have established a mutual understanding and formed a regular regiment with their watchwords and their countersigns; the others are raw recruits, and can never be welcomed as comrades.

It was not easy to discomfit Mr. Charles Sotheran, but the arrival of these newcomers made him exceedingly angry, and the more so because it was easy to perceive that his hostess and Miss Mary by no means shared his displeasure. Mrs. Beckett’s welcome to them was indeed tinged with irritation: ‘So you are come at last,’ she said, but it was in a tone which implied that late was better than never, and the pressure of her hand was in both cases very reassuring. Miss Marvon said nothing but ‘Good morning,’ but she said it with her brightest smile, and her hand remained longer in that of Mr. Edgar Dornay (or so Mr. Sotheran thought) than the occasion at all demanded.

Mr. Edgar was the younger of the two visitors. A tall, well-favoured fellow enough save for a slight touch of effeminacy or dandyism. His slight black moustache was twirled into points so sharp that they might have threaded the eye of a needle; he had a frameless, stringless glass, which stuck in his eye with the tenacity of a limpet, and he spoke with an elaborate slowness which seemed to suggest the extremity of exhaustion. But he had an intelligent face nevertheless, and what he said was well expressed.

Mr. Dornay the elder was Edgar’s uncle, and twice his age—the one being fifty, the other twenty-five—but there was no such

disproportion of years in their appearance. Edgar's quiet ways and well-considered speech would have better suited one of an elder generation; his manner was essentially mature; it was only in his smile that youth was manifested. He did not often smile, but when he did so, one acknowledged that a man could be beautiful: he reminded you of the Sun-god. Now Mr. Dornay senior's smile was the worst part of him. He performed the operation, as the Scotch gentleman acknowledged that he joked, 'with deeficulty,' for fear of showing certain false teeth. It is terrible to reflect that when one grows old even a smile loses its charm. It is nature's hint, perhaps, that it is time that our laughing days were over, but it is a very grim one.

When Ralph Dornay did not smile, or smiled with care, he was an attractive object, and not the least like an uncle. His age might have been guessed at forty, and his figure, set off by a dark-blue frock coat, and an irreproachable white waistcoat, was that of a man still younger. His eye was bright, his voice cheery, and his speech gay and fluent. One would have set him down as a soldier of the genial old-fashioned type, or one of those clever Irishmen who have contrived to smother their brogue. As a matter of fact, he was of no occupation, and an Englishman. He belonged to an ancient family, of which his nephew was the chief, and he regarded him with great respect accordingly. If it could not be said of him that he passed his life in defending Edgar's character, he was always ready to break a lance for him against the many antagonists whom the young man's airs and graces evoked. And this was the more creditable to him as he could derive no material benefit from such championship. When the junior branches of old families are in these days demonstrative in their attachment to the head of their house, he has generally something to give them. Though the feudal system is extinguished, human nature is much the same as it used to be; the difference is in degree and kind. Even a duke can now hardly ensure protection and immunity for the peccadillos of his vassals; but even in less ambitious quarters there are some good things going still, and for the maintenance of family loyalty there is no such preserving pickle as expectations. Now Edgar Dornay, though in possession of Cliffe Park, the hereditary dwelling-place of his race, could not afford to live there even if he had wished to do so, which was, however, far from being the case. The estate was mortgaged up to the hilt, and burdened with all sorts of payments to certain elderly relatives and connections, to

whom the expression 'first come, first served,' was much more than a phrase. The present head of the family was in fact less well provided for than the branches, one of whom was Uncle Ralph himself. What he had was not very much, it is true ; but when one is prudent and careful to spend every shilling upon one's own needs, a little money may be made to go a great way. He had certainly no hope of any increase from his nephew's garner.

Yet there were some who denied that Uncle Ralph's feudal attachment was altogether disinterested, since it was to his nephew's friendship that he owed his place in society. Edgar Dornay was not popular among his own sex, but his very unpopularity was in some sort a tribute to his importance ; men do not take the trouble to dislike the insignificant, and Edgar had made a certain position for himself. Without being a preacher of æsthetics, he could talk its jargon, and thoroughly understood the art of persuading folks that they are catching gleams of the Unintelligible when in reality they only understand what you are saying about it. The women who wished to be thought artistic, philosophic, and also exceptionally well dressed, adored him. Women of a higher type he caught with another springe. With them he was as frank as with the others he was obscure ; each one was flattered with the idea that he only 'spread himself' for her, and laid bare the aspirations of a noble nature which were concealed from the multitude by a mask of reticence and pedantry. For the rest, he was not without his good points ; though Mr. Charles Sotheran could never perceive them. The one young gentleman had something too much of nature about him, the other a great deal too much of art. They mixed together no better than water and sulphur, and it was no spoon that could smooth matters between them. Mrs. Beckett had confided to Mary that she always felt on thorns when they were in each other's company ; and it was because she had been expecting the Dornays that afternoon that 'Charley' had not been received with his usual cordial welcome. The whole matter had been clear to him directly their names were mentioned, and easily accounted for the bitterness with which he had spoken of the Unpunctual. A vice never seems so reprehensible as when it is practised by those we dislike.

When the Dornays entered, Sotheran rose from his seat and took his leave.

'So soon ?' said Mrs. Beckett in her kindest tone.

The tone he knew was to make amends for his voluntary exile ; the words were a mere compliment.

'You will give my love to your dear mother when you write,' said Mary, warmly.

He nodded, and smiled grimly as though he were thinking 'I haven't got it to give,' or perhaps because he felt that he was leaving her with a happier rival.

A few words of kindness too were given him by the hostess after his departure. 'What a bright fellow Charley is; I really don't know anyone with such a flow of spirits.'

To which Mr. Dornay the elder replied: 'Quite true, a most engaging young man;' and his nephew yawned approval.

These tributes to the departed having been duly paid, the company proceeded to discuss their usual topics. The conversation was not intellectually above the level of that which takes place at most afternoon teas, which, while ranging from Shakespeare to the musical glasses, has a decided tendency towards the latter: though, thanks to the food and wine, it had perhaps more vigour and spirit. Edgar spoke with severity against some new theory of admitting the principle of humour into decoration; alluded to the fancy alphabet, with its dropped H in a well-known dining-room at Kensington; and animadverted against gargoyles in architecture. Though his views were far from lucid they were well expressed, and gave almost the same impression of solidity (though they had none) as a stereoscope; the red light of a chemist's shop under similar circumstances—i.e. in a dense fog—assumes the resemblance of the sun. Uncle Ralph, though to all appearances rapt in admiration of his nephew's eloquence, understood not one syllable of it, and presently the widow herself 'dropped off gorged' with so much splendid colouring, and observed in a low tone to him—

'You were at Ascot of course, Mr. Dornay, on Thursday?'

'No, not I; the Derby is my only dissipation in that way;' then added in a low voice, 'Edgar was there, I am sorry to say, and, as usual, unfortunate.'

'How naughty he is!' said the widow, looking towards the young man with more pity, one would say, for his bad luck than reprehension of his bad habits. 'I shall take the opportunity of giving him a lecture. Mary, I see Mr. Dornay has no flower in his buttonhole; choose him one from the conservatory.'

The observation of course referred to Uncle Ralph; Mr. Edgar Dornay would as soon think of coming out without a flower in his buttonhole as without his hat. Mary rose at once to obey, or oblige, her hostess. It was curious, but short as was the interval

that had elapsed since Mrs. Beckett's attention had been diverted from decorative art, its high priest had ended his dissertation upon it, and was now conversing with Mary in low tones upon some other subject—to judge from her look, at least an equally attractive one. As she rose, he too left his chair, and having opened for her the glass-door of the conservatory—hardly a sitting-room in Beckett House was without one—was about to follow her into it when the widow called him back, in a tone which could not be gainsaid.

‘You are an arbiter of taste, Mr. Edgar, as everyone knows, but surely your uncle is the best judge of what flower he prefers for his own coat.’

So Uncle Ralph took his place by the young lady's side, closing the door behind them, while the widow and Edgar were left *tête-à-tête* together. A glass-door is a non-conductor of sound, but one can see through it; and as Mr. Ralph Dornay wished to have a few words with his companion in private, he made a pretended admiration for southern plants and trees his excuse for straying with her beyond the floral portion of the conservatory, and among the tropical vegetation. Though the old powers of fern seed to render one invisible are scoffed at in these days, there is no doubt of ferns doing it if they are but tall enough; and the same, even without that reservation, may be said of palms.

‘Do you know the language of flowers, Miss Mary?’ inquired Uncle Ralph in significant tones.

‘When I was a child I learnt it,’ she answered indifferently, but with an inner sense of expectancy nevertheless, that it cost her some pains to conceal. She did not anticipate that Mr. Dornay was going to make love to her, but there was something in his voice which, in connection with what she knew of him, led her to fear—or hope—that he was about to speak of love.

‘Then you know what the palm signifies,’ he continued, looking up at the branches that canopied them. It was observable that throughout their interview Mr. Dornay always did look either up or down, and never at the face of his companion, so that a spectator (who did not hear him) would have said, ‘This gentleman thinks of nothing but trees and flowers.’

‘The palm indicates victory,’ said Mary quietly.

‘Just so. I am here to say that it lies within your grasp.’

‘I do not understand you, Mr. Dornay.’

‘I think you do. But it is only natural—or at all events prudent—that you should affect unconsciousness. You imagine

that you are in the presence of an enemy, and are inclined to look upon even his gifts with suspicion.'

'I understand you now, Mr. Dornay,' she replied, and this time very coldly, 'even less than before.'

'Then your change of tone belies you, my dear young lady,' he answered curtly; 'come, the opportunity that has been afforded for our speaking together must needs be short; do not let us waste time in fencing. You will admit, I suppose, at least this much, that you love my nephew. Your face indeed tells me so; for while I speak of him it has changed as though this white camellia had become a red one. But I have known it long ago; Edgar and I have no secrets from each other.'

'I am very sure that your nephew never told you—what you have just now had the impertinence to imply.'

'Quite true, Miss Mary. He only told me that he loved *you*; I took it for granted that there was reciprocity; the theory of "the most favoured nation" holds equally good with individuals. I must needs add, in spite of your disclaimer, that you knew that I knew it. Confess, now, that you have hitherto considered me as—well, not as an enemy perhaps, but an antagonist, an obstacle, but for which the course of true love would have run more smoothly. I have treated you, never, I hope, with disrespect, but in a manner, I confess it, that may have suggested hostility.'

The girl looked up at him with disdain; the expression was lost upon him, for he was regarding an orange on its tree with all the attention of an intending purchaser; but he could not escape the scornfulness of her tone.

'You have treated me, Mr. Dornay,' she said, 'I do not say with studied indifference, but with that indifference which is natural to you when you are addressing persons of no consequence, and from whom you can reap no benefit.'

'Bitter, bitter!' returned the other with a reproachful look at the golden fruit; 'to think that a thing so beautiful should have pips in it.'

'As to your being an obstacle,' she continued, 'if anything which such as you can say can turn a man's heart from her he loves, and induce him to give her up, for her own sake he had better do so: for if she be a true woman, let her be ever so poor, he would not be worthy of her.'

'Heroics,' muttered the other contemptuously; 'you should speak them in blank verse.' Blank or not, however, there had been something in her words that had gone home to him, for his

voice trembled with rage as he added, 'Upon my life, young woman, you are not very conciliatory!'

'It would be useless for me to be so, even if I felt inclined, which I do not,' was the quick rejoinder. 'Conciliation with some people has only the effect of encouraging them to tread on you.'

'I recognise the sentiment, Miss Mary, which I heard expressed the other day—only more in the rough—by the young gentleman who has just taken his leave of us. I would respectfully advise you—for the object you have at heart—not to sit at the feet of that youthful Gamaliel; Edgar and I do not like him.'

'Very likely. To one at least of you I can imagine his independence of character being very unwelcome.'

'In a clerk of the Probate Office, of tender years, I must confess it seems to me somewhat out of place,' answered Dornay. 'On the other hand it is an easy rôle to play, and admits of great self-indulgence in the way of impertinence; nor do I lose sight of the fact that Mr. Charles Sotheran may think it acceptable to a certain person as an agreeable change from the flattery and adulation that she meets with elsewhere.'

'Fresh air after incense! Well, that is very complimentary,' said Mary, smiling for the first time.

'I should rather call it pumped air,' said Mr. Dornay. 'However, Mr. Sotheran is not worth debate. What I wish to say is, that however right you may have hitherto been with respect to my feelings towards you as regards my nephew, they have undergone a complete change. I have done my best to oppose your union with him and have failed. I lay down my arms and acknowledge myself vanquished. Henceforth I am upon his side and yours. If you will not permit me to be your friend—'

She shook her head and drew back: 'I mistrust you, Mr. Dornay,' she said coldly.

'Edgar told me that you were frankness itself, and begged he's right!' exclaimed the other admiringly. 'If he had but half your determination of character he would be in a very different position; but he is so damned weak!—I beg your pardon for the expression, Miss Marvon.'

She bowed: 'You forget to whom you are apologising, sir; I am only a dependent.'

'Very true, but you are going to be Mrs. Dornay,' observed the other naïvely. 'Now, my dear young lady, do be reasonable,' he continued remonstratingly. 'If we can never be friends—which is your suggestion, not mine, remember—at least let us be allies,

When you become my nephew's wife, consider how inconvenient—not to put it more strongly—this mutual distrust will be to both of us. You will have great influence, no doubt; but I am the nearest relation, and should anything occur to shake the pillars of domestic peace, as Edgar calls it, he will naturally look to me for advice. Then I may do you a good turn.'

'I do not believe you are picturing me as your nephew's wife at all, Mr. Dornay,' was the girl's quiet reply.

'I am. Upon my soul and honour I am!' put in the other vehemently. 'As sure as I breathe I will do my very best to bring about your marriage. That is what I have come here to say, so help me Heaven!'

'It may be so. But you have something else to say. You have omitted to name the price I am to pay for your valuable assistance.' It could not have been the effect of sunlight because they both stood in the shade; though those who knew him best would certainly have ascribed it to some atmospheric illusion;—but here Mr. Ralph Dornay blushed.

'I don't know what you mean, Miss Mary,' he answered; 'but of course there are considerations. I have hinted to you how we can, as near connections, be mutually useful to one another in the future.'

'And in the mean time?' said the girl scornfully. 'Is there nothing I can do for you in the mean time?'

'Nothing. You have already said, though in a manner that I hope your better nature has already repented of, that you could be of no advantage to me.'

'True. Still it strikes me that it may have struck you, Mr. Dornay, that circumstances may arise in which I might be of some disadvantage to you. Humble as is my position, it is just possible my advice may be asked by a certain person upon a matter in which you are very much interested; one which has only recently entered your mind, I think, but which is now monopolising it, and concerning which, to use your own candid language, I might do you a good turn—or not.'

'Well?' It was but a monosyllable, yet pregnant with significance, and the speaker for the first time looked full in his companion's face with anxious intentness.

'If I am asked my opinion of that matter, Mr. Dornay,' she continued, 'I shall give it honestly. Nothing which you can promise me; nothing which you can give me (which is very different) will deter me from so doing. On the other hand, your

secret is as safe with me as it was before you spoke. I will do you no voluntary injury, though you have done many a one to me.'

'I never have,' he murmured.

'Yes, sir; for slights, humiliations, even neglect itself, to one like me, are injuries. Though you used no daggers you have spoken them designedly, and of malice prepense; words that lie as ready to the tongue of the upstart and the coward, as does the dagger to the hand of the assassin. I do not forgive them; I do not forget them; but I should scorn myself as I scorn you if they suggested retaliation.—And now that we clearly understand one another, what flower shall I gather for your buttonhole, Mr. Dornay?'

Without a word he pointed to the nearest flower, which happened to be a blush rose. She clipped it with her scissors, and gave it to him; then turned and led the way back to the dining-room.

CHAPTER IV.

LEAP-YEAR.

It is not the scene which dictates the sentiment, or the conversation between Uncle Ralph and Mary Marvon among the ferns and flowers would have been of a very different kind to that we have described.

The dining-room, on the other hand, though a very noble apartment, would hardly have suggested by association—not to mention the *débris* of lunch which still strewed the table—any tender topic; yet no sooner did the other couple leave it, and the widow find herself alone with Mr. Edgar Dornay, than her voice and manner softened, and her face became full of a gentle earnestness and sympathy.

'My dear Edgar,' she said, in a pleasant voice, 'I have got something very serious to say to you.'

He took the chair beside her to which she had beckoned him, and answered with his brightest smile, 'Your preface frightens me, my dear Mrs. Beckett; but you don't *look* serious, which gives me consolation.'

'I wish to look serious, Edgar; vexed and disappointed too; nay, I would be downright angry with you, only somehow I never can. I am sure I don't know what it is that makes me so kind—nay blind—to your failings?'

She spoke half interrogatively, as though if he had any theory upon that point she would be glad to hear it, but he only shook his head.

'That is my best chance with you and with everybody,' he said hastily, 'that they should shut their eyes, or at the worst wink at my peccadillos; for they are many.'

'Well, it is something that you show humility,' she answered, though with a touch of disappointment mingling with that faint praise; 'and I do believe they are but peccadillos, Edgar.'

'I don't know,' he answered; 'some moralists would be very severe on me; but you, I venture to think, are not a hanging judge.'

'By which you mean, I suppose, you naughty man, that I would not hang *you*.' She tapped his hand lightly with her fingers, and looked at him certainly with an expression very different from that of a judge when he puts on the black cap. Mrs. Beckett had not actually taken to caps, but, perhaps as much for concealment as for ornament, a piece of lace, scarce the size of her own plump hand, was arranged becomingly enough in her brown hair, still unmingled with grey.

'Well, yes, I venture to think you would lean to mercy's side in my case.'

'But then, Edgar, I don't believe you have ever done anything very wrong.'

'That is very good of you, though it shows an excess of charity. It is true, however, that I have never committed murder.'

'Nor suicide,' said the widow, lightly. 'Come, that's two off the list of your possible delinquencies.'

'I am not so sure about suicide,' returned the young man, laughing. 'There are some people who, if they knew all, would at least accuse me of contemplating it.'

The widow's face grew grave, and the colour rushed to her cheeks. 'What people?' she asked, in a tone of indignation.

'The world at large; you know what an interest it takes in one's private affairs.'

'Yes; how much better it imagines it understands them than oneself,' she added, contemptuously; 'for my part I have long learnt to value its opinion at its true worth.'

She took up a leaf that had fallen from the flower-stand on the table and flipped it from her with a finger snap.

'But, then, my dear Mrs. Beckett, you are above the world. This earthly ball lies at your feet.'

'And at yours also,' she said gravely.

'That is true in a sense, of course, but in a very different sense,' he rejoined thoughtfully; 'young men are always given that comfortable assurance; but if they kick the ball—or even *at* it—they have often cause to repent of their audacity. What happens to those who "fly in the face of society," is very similar to the fate of those sea-birds who dash themselves to pieces against the lanterns of lighthouses.'

'That happens from their ignorance,' observed his companion. 'They are right enough in seeking for warmth and light. To my mind the real happiness of life lies in comfort.'

'That is a wide term, my dear Mrs. Beckett. Your ideas of comfort, for example'—he glanced round the room, on the walls of which hung landscapes of Linnell (the widow's favourite painter), and on whose ceiling glowed the bright hues she loved, arranged with harmonious skill—'would to some people appear very like luxury.'

'And why not? the more of comfort one has the better. Everything else in the way of enjoyment sooner or later fades. I have experienced it myself, Edgar; you will say, perhaps, "But you are a woman;" I doubt whether that makes much difference in the long run, but if you think otherwise, ask your uncle. He is a man of the world and thoroughly understands it.'

'But, my dear Mrs. Beckett,' objected the young man, 'you have called a most damaging witness. Uncle Ralph is a martyr to fashion. His boots and, what is worse, his waistcoats are a size too small for him. He dines out continually—here, for example—where he can get no smoke after dinner, though he pines for tobacco after every meal like the bulbul for its mate; he even goes to evening parties, and from sheer exhaustion—not from dancing (he knows better than that), but from boredom—is driven to partake of bad champagne. Comfort! why, comfort is not more "scorned of devils" than it is by Uncle Ralph.'

'I beg your pardon; he does not scorn it. On the contrary, he sacrifices himself for the present in the hope of finding himself at last in cotton wool.'

'Indeed,' smiled the young man. 'Well, it may be so; you ladies have sharper eyes than we have.'

'At all events we see further. What I wish to urge upon you is not only to think of to-day, but of to-morrow.'

'Just so; the future,' said Edgar, rising from his chair and pacing the room. It was evident that he had forgotten where he

was. 'After the suicide of which we were speaking there is another life.'

'May I ask what was the particular form of self-destruction you were contemplating?' inquired the widow. Her eyes were on the table, her hand was busy with some crumbs that lay before her.

'I cannot tell you that,' replied the young man; 'it would not be fair to others.'

There was a long silence; the widow bit her lip; she looked disappointed, vexed, like one who has been pursuing the wrong tack; she was not vexed with her companion, however, for it was in a voice even gentler than before that she once more addressed him.

'If I may be allowed to say so, Edgar, you have two great failings—imprudence and indecision. It is about the first I wish to speak to you, that is to say, if you will listen.'

'I beg your pardon,' said the young man, suddenly stopping in his walk, and resuming his seat beside his companion; 'I was lost in thought, and for the moment imagined myself at home.'

'It was not such a very great mistake, I hope,' was the gentle reply.

'It was not, indeed,' replied the other; 'your house has been always, ever since I have had the pleasure of knowing you' (it was some eighteen months), 'like home; that is, it isn't the least like it,' he added, with ludicrous inconsistency: 'Ralph and I live in a garret.'

'You are always welcome, always, always,' continued the widow earnestly, and without paying attention to this melancholy statement, 'and will ever be so. It is here, above all, that you must come when you need help, Edgar.'

The young man coloured to the roots of his hair; the beautiful path that ran straight up the middle of it looked as if it had been newly gravelled.

'Your advice, I know, has been always most kindly proffered,' he answered evasively, 'and would be most valuable if I only had the sense to take it.'

'Advice, my dear Edgar, is what everybody is willing to give; it costs less than a gas fire and looks as warm and genial; but, though it fills the giver with a virtuous glow, the recipient is often not much the better for it. Now, when I say help, I mean it.'

'I am sure you do,' answered the young man, drawing lines

upon the table-cloth with one of his filbert nails, and listening with feverish impatience for the click of the glass door. A gentle perspiration, such as doctors hail in a feverish patient, bedewed his brow. He was not so much afraid of the widow—indeed, he had a very kindly regard and esteem for her—as he was distrustful of himself. He felt that a crisis was approaching which would compel him to take one of two courses which had long presented themselves to him; he had, in fact, made up his mind which to choose, only decision was abhorrent to him. It was especially abhorrent now, since the course he had determined upon would be unwelcome to his companion. His artist nature shrank from inflicting pain on anyone, but especially on himself; his position was really a painful one.

‘A little bird tells me that you had an unlucky day at Ascot,’ said the widow gently.

‘A blue bird with a white breast, was it not?’ answered the young fellow, forcing a laugh and nodding towards the conservatory. ‘It is the birds of bright plumage that talk the most, though they are not good at singing.’

‘He sings your praises, at all events, you ungrateful man; knowing, doubtless, that they are always pleasing to me.’

‘You are very good to say so, Mrs. Beckett.’

‘Was the sum a large one, may I ask, Edgar, which you so unfortunately ventured.’

Again the colour rushed to the young man’s face. ‘I am not accustomed to bet more than I can pay,’ he answered stiffly.

‘That you are not accustomed to do anything dishonourable, Edgar, I am well aware,’ was the gentle reply, ‘but you are very imprudent.’

‘It is my nature,’ he returned quickly. ‘People talk of “living up” to this and that; I think I may honestly say that whatever income I possessed, I should live up to the last shilling of it.’

‘Perhaps if you were very rich you would think differently,’ said the widow gravely. ‘There is a certain sense of responsibility that attaches to great wealth.’

‘I don’t think that would oppress me, whatever else might, in such a case,’ answered the young man lightly.

‘Then I am afraid you must be naturally extravagant.’

‘I am,’ he replied with a certain earnest frankness; ‘and I resent above all things any check or restraint; that is one of the reasons why I hate Cliffe Park, because it is tied up and I can’t get rid of it.’

‘But surely, Edgar,’ argued the widow gravely, ‘it must be a comfort to feel that something—though it may not be much—is made secure to you in spite of all reverses of fortune.’

‘Not a bit of it. If I could sell that wretched place to-morrow, for example, and pay these Ascot debts—not, of course, but that I *can* pay them,’ he added hastily, ‘from other sources.’

‘Just so; only it is inconvenient to part with a few thousands.’

‘It would be if I owed them,’ returned the young man, laughing; ‘most uncommonly inconvenient.’

‘Then your loss is a mere trifle,’ remarked the widow with an involuntary sigh.

‘To you it would be a mere flea-bite, my dear Mrs. Beckett,’ he replied; ‘but to me five hundred pounds is—well, five hundred pounds.’

‘You have stated the case quite correctly, Edgar; in a manner, too, that I could not have done, since it would have savoured of ostentation. As this sum is to me “a mere flea-bite,” while to pay it is to you a matter of some consequence, will you not allow me—it would be a very great pleasure—to take the privilege of an old friend?’

‘My dear Mrs. Beckett, the thing is impossible,’ exclaimed the young man, starting to his feet.

‘Nay, nay, it is certainly not impossible,’ she answered, ‘because it is as easy for me to do it, as it is for you to resume your seat.’

He bit his lip, but took the chair which she pushed gently towards him.

‘There is nothing to be offended at, surely, Edgar. When we posted to Virginia Water the other day, you thought it no humiliation, I suppose, because I paid for the postilions and the turnpikes. This caraffe of water is more than I need, more than I can drink: shall I not fill your glass for you if you are thirsty. Where is the obligation?’

‘All that is different,’ murmured the young man; ‘you know it is different.’

‘Because money, forsooth, is held by foolish persons to be different from everything else. Suppose, then, I were to die to-morrow, and it was found that I had not, as the phrase goes, “forgotten” you: that it was my wish, as it *is* my wish, Edgar, Heaven knows, to make the road of life smooth for you: that I had, in short, left you half my fortune. You would accept it then; but now, when I am alive, and when the knowledge of my

having conferred some benefit upon you would give me pleasure—the greatest pleasure, perhaps, of which my mind is capable—you reject it ; you spurn it.’

‘Pardon me, dear Mrs. Beckett, I do not spurn it. I appreciate your generosity exceedingly ; and, if I hesitate, it is not so much on my own account, believe me.’

‘Nay, nay,’ she interrupted haughtily, ‘I cannot admit that plea. I am old enough—I mean I have had experience enough of life, Edgar, to be fully capable of taking care of my reputation. I know my position thoroughly ; what the world thinks of me I care not ; what it will dare to say of me is not much. They are coming in’ (she looked towards the glass door). ‘There is no time to speak further on this matter ; reflect upon it ; turn it over in your mind.’

‘I will.’

‘In the meantime I will write to you—— What, Mary, only a common rose for Mr. Dornay after all this time spent in choosing it!’

‘A common rose, madam,’ said Uncle Ralph, with a bow and a smile, ‘like common honesty and common sense, is not so very common ; and, moreover, it stands for True Love, which is rarer still.’

(To be continued.)

Atoms, Molecules, and Ether Waves.

I.

MAN is prone to idealisation. He cannot accept as final the phenomena of the sensible world, but looks behind that world into another which rules the sensible one. From this tendency of the human mind systems of mythology and scientific theories have equally sprung. By the former the experiences of volition, passion, power, and design, manifested among ourselves, were transplanted, with the necessary modifications, into an unseen universe, from which the sway and potency of these magnified human qualities were exerted. 'In the roar of thunder and in the violence of the storm was felt the presence of a shouter and furious strikers, and out of the rain was created an Indra or giver of rain.' It is substantially the same with science, the principal force of which is expended in endeavouring to rend the veil which separates the sensible world from an ultra-sensible one. In both cases our materials, drawn from the world of the senses, are modified by the imagination to suit intellectual needs. The 'first beginnings' of Lucretius were not objects of sense, but they were suggested and illustrated by objects of sense. The idea of atoms proved an early want on the part of minds in pursuit of the knowledge of nature. It has never been relinquished, and in our own day it is growing steadily in power and precision.

The union of bodies in fixed and multiple proportions constitutes the basis of modern atomic theory. The same compound retains, for ever, the same elements, in an unalterable ratio. We cannot produce pure water containing one part, by weight, of hydrogen and nine of oxygen; nor can we produce it when the ratio is one to ten; but we can produce it from the ratio of one to eight, and from no other. So also when water is decomposed by the electric current, the proportion, as regards volumes, is as fixed as in the case of weights. Two volumes of hydrogen and one of oxygen invariably go to the formation of water. Number and harmony, as in the Pythagorean system, are everywhere dominant in this under-world.

Following the discovery of fixed proportions we have that of *multiple* proportions. For the same compound, as above stated, the elementary factors are constant; but one elementary body often unites with another so as to form different compounds. Water, for example, is an oxide of hydrogen; but a peroxide of that substance also exists, containing exactly double the quantity of oxygen. Nitrogen also unites with oxygen in various ratios, but not in all. The union takes place, not gradually and uniformly, but by steps, a definite weight of matter being added at each step. The larger combining quantities of oxygen are thus multiples of the smaller ones. It is the same with other combinations.

We remain thus far in the region of fact: why not rest there? It might as well be asked why we do not, like our poor relations of the woods and forests, rest content with the facts of the sensible world. In virtue of our mental idiosyncrasy, we demand *why* bodies should combine in multiple proportions, and the outcome and answer of this question is the atomic theory. The definite weights of matter above referred to represent the weights of atoms, indivisible by any force which chemistry has hitherto brought to bear upon them. If matter were a *continuum*—if it were not rounded off, so to say, into these discrete atomic masses—the impassable breaches of continuity which the law of multiple proportions reveals, could not be accounted for. These atoms are what Maxwell finely calls ‘the foundation stones of the material universe’ which, amid the wreck of composite matter, ‘remain unbroken and unworn.’

A group of atoms drawn and held together by what chemists term affinity, is called a molecule. The ultimate parts of all compound bodies are molecules. A molecule of water, for example, consists of two atoms of hydrogen, which grasp and are grasped by one atom of oxygen. When water is converted into steam, the distances between the molecules are greatly augmented, but the molecules themselves continue intact. We must not, however, picture the constituent atoms of any molecule as held so rigidly together as to render intestine motion impossible. The interlocked atoms have still liberty of vibration, which may, under certain circumstances, become so intense as to shake the molecule asunder. Most molecules—probably all—are wrecked by intense heat, or in other words by intense vibratory motion; and many are wrecked by a very moderate heat of the proper quality. Indeed, a weak force, which bears a suitable relation to the constitution of the

molecule, can, by timely savings and accumulations, accomplish what a strong force out of relation fails to achieve.

We have here a glimpse of the world in which the physical philosopher for the most part resides. Science has been defined as 'organised common sense;' by whom I have forgotten; but, unless we stretch unduly the definition of common sense, I think it is hardly applicable to this world of molecules. I should be inclined to ascribe the creation of that world to inspiration rather than to what is currently known as common sense. For the natural history sciences the definition may stand—hardly for the physical and mathematical sciences.

The sensation of light is produced by a succession of waves which strike the retina in periodic intervals; and such waves, impinging on the molecules of bodies, agitate their constituent atoms. These atoms are so small, and, when grouped to molecules, are so tightly clasped together, that they are capable of tremors equal in rapidity to those of light and radiant heat. To a mind coming freshly to these subjects, the numbers with which scientific men here habitually deal must appear utterly fantastical; and yet, to minds trained in the logic of science, they express most sober and certain truth. The constituent atoms of molecules can vibrate to and fro millions of millions of times in a second. The waves of light and of radiant heat follow each other at similar rates through the luminiferous ether. Further, the atoms of different molecules are held together with varying degrees of tightness—they are tuned, as it were, to notes of different pitch. Suppose then light-waves, or heat-waves, to impinge upon an assemblage of such molecules, what may be expected to occur? The same as what occurs when a piano is opened and sung into. The waves of sound select the strings which respectively respond to them—the strings, that is to say, whose rates of vibration are the same as their own—and of the general series of strings these only sound. The vibratory motion of the voice, imparted first to the air, is here taken up by the strings. It may be regarded as *absorbed*, each string constituting itself thereby a new centre of motion. Thus also, as regards the tightly locked atoms of molecules on which waves of light or radiant heat impinge. Like the waves of sound just adverted to, the waves of ether select those atoms whose periods of vibration synchronise with their own periods of recurrence, and to such atoms deliver up their motion. It is thus that light and radiant heat are absorbed.

And here the statement, though elementary, must not be

omitted, that the colours of the prismatic spectrum, which are presented in an impure form in the rainbow, are due to different rates of atomic vibration in their source, the sun. From the extreme red to the extreme violet, between which are embraced all colours visible to the human eye, the rapidity of vibration steadily increases, the length of the waves of ether produced by these vibrations diminishing in the same proportion. I say 'visible to the human eye,' because there may be eyes capable of receiving visual impression from waves which do not affect ours. There is a vast store of rays, or more correctly waves, beyond the red, and also beyond the violet, which are incompetent to excite our vision; so that could the whole length of the spectrum, visible and invisible, be seen by the same eye, its length would be vastly augmented.

I have spoken of molecules being wrecked by a moderate amount of heat of the proper quality: let us examine this point for a moment. There is a liquid called nitrite of amyl—frequently administered to patients suffering from heart disease. The liquid is volatile, and its vapour is usually inhaled by the patient. Let a quantity of this vapour be introduced into a wide glass tube, and let a concentrated beam of solar light be sent through the tube along its axis. Prior to the entry of the beam, the vapour is as invisible as the purest air. When the light enters, a bright cloud is immediately precipitated on the beam. This is entirely due to the waves of light, which wreck the nitrite of amyl molecules, the products of decomposition forming innumerable liquid particles which constitute the cloud. Many other gases and vapours are acted upon in a similar manner. Now the waves that produce this decomposition are by no means the most powerful of those emitted by the sun. It is, for example, possible to gather up the ultra-red waves into a concentrated beam, and to send it through the vapour, like the beam of light. But, though possessing vastly greater energy than the light waves, they fail to produce decomposition. Hence the justification of the statement already made, that a suitable relation must subsist between the molecules and the waves of ether to render the latter effectual.

A very impressive illustration of the decomposing power of the waves of light is here purposely chosen; but the processes of photography illustrate the same principle. The photographer, without fear, illuminates his developing room with light transmitted through red or yellow glass; but he dares not use blue glass, for blue light would decompose his chemicals. And yet

the waves of red light, measured by the amount of energy which they carry, are immensely more powerful than the waves of blue. The blue rays are usually called chemical rays—a misleading term; for, as Draper and others have taught us, the rays that produce the grandest chemical effects in nature, by decomposing the carbonic acid and water which form the nutriment of plants, are not the blue ones. In regard, however, to the salts of silver, and many other compounds, the blue rays are the most effectual. How is it then that weak waves can produce effects which strong waves are incompetent to produce? This is a feature characteristic of periodic motion. In the experiment of singing into an open piano already referred to, it is the accord subsisting between the vibrations of the voice and those of the string that causes the latter to sound. Were this accord absent, the intensity of the voice might be quintupled, without producing any response. But when voice and string are identical in pitch, the successive impulses add themselves together, and this addition renders them, in the aggregate, powerful, though individually they may be weak. In some such fashion the periodic strokes of the smaller ether waves accumulate, till the atoms on which their timed impulses impinge are jerked asunder, and what we call chemical decomposition ensues.

Savart was the first to show the influence of musical sounds upon liquid jets, and I have now to describe an experiment belonging to this class, which bears upon the present question. From a screw-tap in my little Alpine kitchen I permitted, an hour ago, a vein of water to descend into a trough, so arranging the flow that the jet was steady and continuous from top to bottom. A slight diminution of the orifice caused the continuous portion of the vein to shorten, the part further down resolving itself into drops. In my experiment, however, the vein, before it broke, was intersected by the bottom of the trough. Shouting near the descending jet produced no sensible effect upon it. The higher notes of the voice, however powerful, were also ineffectual. But when the voice was lowered to about 130 vibrations a second, the feeblest utterance of this note sufficed to shorten, by one half, the continuous portion of the jet. The responsive drops ran along the vein, pattered against the trough, and scattered a copious spray round their place of impact. When the note ceased, the continuity and steadiness of the vein were immediately restored. The formation of the drops was here periodic; and when the vibrations of the note accurately synchronised with the periods of the drops, the waves of sound aided what Plateau has proved to be the natural

tendency of the liquid cylinder to resolve itself into spherules, and virtually decomposed the vein.

I have stated, without proof, that where absorption occurs, the motion of the ether-waves is taken up by the constituent atoms of molecules. It is conceivable that the ether-waves, in passing through an assemblage of molecules, might deliver up their motion to each molecule as a whole, leaving the relative positions of the constituent atoms unchanged. But the long series of reactions, represented by the deportment of nitrite of amyl vapour, does not favour this conception; for, were the atoms animated solely by a common motion, the molecules would not be decomposed. The fact of decomposition, then, goes to prove the atoms to be the seat of the absorption. They, in great part, take up the energy of the ether-waves, whereby their union is severed, and the building materials of the molecules are scattered abroad.

Molecules differ in stability; some of them, though hit by waves of considerable force, and taking up the motions of these waves, nevertheless hold their own with a tenacity which defies decomposition. And here, in passing, I may say that it would give me extreme pleasure to be able to point to my researches in confirmation of the solar theory recently enunciated by my friend the President of the British Association. But though the experiments which I have made on the decomposition of vapours by light might be numbered by the thousand, I have, to my regret, encountered no fact which proves that free aqueous vapour is decomposed by the solar rays, or that the sun is reheated by the combination of gases, in the severance of which it had previously sacrificed its heat.

II.

The memorable investigations of Leslie and Rumford, and the subsequent classical researches of Melloni, dealt, in the main, with the properties of radiant heat; while in my investigations, radiant heat, instead of being regarded as an end, was employed as a means of exploring molecular condition. On this score little could be said until the gaseous form of matter was brought under the dominion of experiment. This was first effected in 1859, when it was proved that gases and vapours, notwithstanding the open door which the distances between their molecules might be supposed to offer to the heat waves, were, in many cases, able

effectually to bar their passage. It was then proved that while the elementary gases and their mixtures, including among the latter the earth's atmosphere, were almost as pervious as a vacuum to ordinary radiant heat, the compound gases were one and all absorbers, some of them taking up with intense avidity the motion of the ether-waves.

A single illustration will here suffice. Let a mixture of hydrogen and nitrogen in the proportion of three to fourteen by weight, be enclosed in a space through which are passing the heat rays from an ordinary stove. The gaseous mixture offers no measurable impediment to the rays of heat. Let the hydrogen and nitrogen now unite to form the compound ammonia. A magical change instantly occurs. The number of atoms present remains unchanged. The transparency of the compound is quite equal to that of the mixture prior to combination. No change is perceptible to the eye, but the keen vision of experiment soon detects the fact that the perfectly transparent and highly attenuated ammonia resembles pitch or lampblack in its behaviour to the rays of heat.

There is probably boldness, if not rashness, in the attempt to make these ultra-sensible actions generally intelligible, and I may have already transgressed the limits beyond which the writer of a familiar article cannot profitably go. There may, however, be a remnant of readers willing to accompany me, and for their sakes I proceed. A hundred compounds might be named which, like the ammonia, are transparent to light, but more or less opaque—often, indeed, intensely opaque—to the rays of heat from obscure sources. Now the difference between these latter rays and the light-rays is purely a difference of period of vibration. The vibrations in the case of light are more rapid, and the ether waves which they produce are shorter, than in the case of obscure heat. Why then should the ultra-red waves be intercepted by bodies like ammonia, while the more rapidly recurrent waves of the whole visible spectrum are allowed free transmission? The answer I hold to be that, by the act of chemical combination, the vibrations of the constituent atoms of the molecules are rendered so sluggish as to synchronise with the motions of the longer waves. They resemble loaded piano-strings, or slowly descending water-jets, requiring notes of low pitch to set them in motion.

The influence of synchronism between the 'radiant' and the 'absorbent' is well shown by the behaviour of carbonic acid gas. To the complex emission from our heated stove, carbonic acid

would be one of the most transparent of gases. For such waves olefiant gas, for example, would vastly transcend it in absorbing power. But when we select a radiant with whose waves the atoms of carbonic acid are in accord, the case is entirely altered. Such a radiant is found in a carbonic oxide flame, where the radiating body is really hot carbonic acid. To this special radiation carbonic acid is the most opaque of gases.

And here we find ourselves face to face with a question of great delicacy and importance. Both as a radiator, and as an absorber, carbonic acid is, in general, a feeble gas. It is beaten in this respect by chloride of methyl, ethylene, ammonia, sulphurous acid, nitrous oxide, and marsh gas. Compared with some of these gases, its behaviour in fact approaches that of elementary bodies. May it not help to explain their neutrality? The doctrine is now very generally accepted that atoms of the same kind may, like atoms of different kinds, group themselves to molecules. Affinity exists between hydrogen and hydrogen, and between chlorine and chlorine, as well as between hydrogen and chlorine. We have thus homogeneous molecules as well as heterogeneous molecules, and the neutrality so strikingly exhibited by the elements may be due to a quality of which carbonic acid furnishes a partial illustration. The paired atoms of the elementary molecules may be so out of accord with the periods of the ultra-red waves—the vibrating periods of these atoms may, for example, be so rapid—as to disqualify them both from emitting those waves, and from accepting their energy. This would practically destroy their power, both as radiators and absorbers. I have reason to know that a distinguished authority has for some time entertained this hypothesis.

We must, however, refresh ourselves by occasional contact with the solid ground of experiment, and an interesting problem now lies before us awaiting experimental solution. Suppose 200 men to be scattered equably throughout the length of Pall Mall. By timely swerving now and then a runner from St. James's Palace to the Athenæum Club might be able to get through such a crowd without much hindrance. But supposing the men to close up so as to form a dense file crossing Pall Mall from north to south: such a barrier might seriously impede, or entirely stop, the runner. Instead of a crowd of men, let us imagine a column of molecules under small pressure, thus resembling the sparsely distributed crowd. Let us suppose the column to shorten, without change in the quantity of matter, until the molecules are so squeezed together as to resemble the closed file across Pall

Mall. During these changes of density, would the action of the molecules upon a beam of heat passing among them, at all resemble the action of the crowd upon the runner?

We must answer this question by direct experiment. To form our molecular crowd we place, in the first instance, a gas or vapour in a tube 38 inches long, the ends of which are closed with circular windows, air-tight, but formed of a substance which offers little or no obstruction to the calorific waves. Calling the measured value of a heat-beam passing through this tube 100, we carefully determine the proportionate part of this total absorbed by the molecules in the tube. We then gather precisely the same number of molecules into a column 10·8 inches long, the one column being thus three and a half times the length of the other. In this case also we determine the quantity of radiant heat absorbed. By the depression of a barometric column, we can easily and exactly measure out the proper quantities of the gaseous body. It is obvious that 1 mercury inch of vapour, in the long tube, would represent precisely the same amount of matter—or, in other words, the same number of molecules—as $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in the short one; while 2 inches of vapour in the long tube would be equivalent to 7 inches in the short one.

The experiments have been made with the vapours of two very volatile liquids, namely, sulphuric ether and hydride of amyl. The sources of radiant heat were, in some cases, an incandescent lime cylinder, and in others a spiral of platinum wire, heated to bright redness by an electric current. One or two of the measurements will suffice for the purposes of illustration. First then, as regards the lime light: for 1 inch of pressure in the long tube, the absorption was 18·4 per cent. of the total beam; while for 3·5 inches of pressure in the short tube, the absorption was 18·8 per cent., or almost exactly the same as the former. For 2 inches pressure, moreover, in the long tube, the absorption was 25·7 per cent.; while for 7 inches, in the short tube, it was 25·6 per cent. of the total beam. Thus closely do the absorptions in the two cases run together—thus emphatically do the molecules assert their individuality. As long as their number is unaltered, their action on radiant heat is unchanged. Passing from the lime-light to the incandescent spiral, the absorptions of the smaller equivalent quantities, in the two tubes, were 23·5 and 23·4 per cent.; while the absorptions of the larger equivalent quantities were 32·1 and 32·6 per cent. respectively. This constancy of absorption, when the

density of a gas or vapour is varied, I have called 'the conservation of molecular action.'

But it may be urged that the change of density, in these experiments, has not been carried far enough to justify the enunciation of a law of molecular physics. The condensation into less than one-third of the space does not, it may be said, quite represent the close file of men across Pall Mall. Let us therefore push matters to extremes, and continue the condensation till the vapour has been squeezed into a liquid. To the pure change of density we shall then have added the change in the state of aggregation. The experiments here are more easily described than executed; nevertheless, by sufficient training, scrupulous accuracy, and minute attention to details, success may be ensured. Knowing the respective specific gravities, it is easy, by calculation, to determine the condensation requisite to reduce a column of vapour of definite density and length to a layer of liquid of definite thickness. Let the vapour, for example, be that of sulphuric ether, and let it be introduced into our 38-inch tube till a pressure of 7.2 inches of mercury is obtained. Or let it be hydride of amyl, of the same length, and at a pressure of 6.6 inches. Supposing the column to shorten, the vapour would become proportionally denser, and would, in each case, end in the production of a layer of liquid exactly 1 millimeter in thickness.¹ Conversely, a layer of liquid ether, or of hydride of amyl, of this thickness, were its molecules freed from the thrall of cohesion, would form a column of vapour 38 inches long, at a pressure of 7.2 inches in the one case, and of 6.6 inches in the other. In passing through the liquid layer, a beam of heat encounters the same number of molecules as in passing through the vapour layer; and our problem is to decide, by experiment, whether, in both cases, the molecule is not the dominant factor, or whether its power is augmented, diminished, or otherwise overridden by the state of aggregation.

Using the sources of heat before mentioned, and employing diathermanous lenses, or silvered mirrors, to render the rays from those sources parallel, the absorption of radiant heat was determined, first for the liquid layer, and then for its equivalent vaporous layer. As before, a representative experiment or two will suffice for illustration. When the substance was sulphuric ether, and the source of radiant heat an incandescent platinum spiral, the absorption by the column of vapour was found to be

¹ The millimeter is $\frac{1}{25}$ th of an inch.

66·7 per cent. of the total beam. The absorption of the equivalent liquid layer was next determined, and found to be 67·2 per cent. Liquid and vapour, therefore, differed from each other only 0·5 per cent.: in other words, they were practically identical in their action. The radiation from the lime-light has a greater power of penetration through transparent substances than that from the spiral. In the emission from both of these sources we have a mixture of obscure and luminous rays; but the ratio of the latter to the former, in the limelight, is greater than in the spiral; and, as the very meaning of transparency is perviousness to the luminous rays, the emission in which these rays are predominant must pass most freely through transparent substances. Increased transmission implies diminished absorption; and, accordingly, the respective absorptions of ether vapour and liquid ether, when the limelight was used, instead of being 66·7 and 67·2 per cent., were found to be—

Vapour	.	.	.	33·3 per cent.
Liquid	.	.	.	33·3 „

no difference whatever being observed between the two states of aggregation. The same was found true of hydride of amyl.

This constancy and continuity of the action exerted on the waves of heat when the state of aggregation is changed, I have called ‘the thermal continuity of liquids and vapours.’ It is, I think, the strongest illustration hitherto adduced of the conservation of molecular action.

Thus, by new methods of search, we reach a result which was long ago enunciated on other grounds. Water is well known to be one of the most opaque of liquids to the waves of obscure heat. But if the relation of liquids to their vapours be that here shadowed forth; if in both cases the molecule asserts itself to be the dominant factor, then the dispersion of the water of our seas and rivers, as invisible aqueous vapour in our atmosphere, does not annul the action of the molecules on solar and terrestrial heat. Both are profoundly modified by this constituent; but as aqueous vapour is transparent, which, as before explained, means pervious to the luminous rays, and as the emission from the sun abounds in such rays, while from the earth’s emission they are wholly absent, the vapour-screen offers a far greater hindrance to the outflow of heat from the earth towards space than to the inflow from the sun towards the earth. The elevation of our planet’s temperature is therefore a direct consequence of the exist-

ence of aqueous vapour in our air. Flimsy as that garment may appear, were it removed, terrestrial life would probably perish through the consequent refrigeration.

I have thus endeavoured to give some account of a recent incursion into that ultra-sensible world mentioned at the outset of this paper. Invited by my publishers, with whom I have now worked in harmony for a period of twenty years, to send some contribution to the first number of their new Magazine, I could not refuse them this proof of my good-will.

J. TYNDALL.

ALP LUSGEN:

September 4, 1882.

Lexington.

THE Bostonian spring being more than usually embittered against mankind this year, we left our quarters in town very early, and went to pass the month of May in the pretty and historic village of Lexington. It lies ten or twelve miles inland; it is not only a little beyond the worst of the east wind, but is just a little too far from Boston to be strictly suburban in aspect; and thanks chiefly to an absence of water-power (a clear brown brook, that you may anywhere jump across, idles through the pastures unmolested by a mill-wheel), Lexington has not yet been overtaken by the unpicturesque prosperity which has befallen so many New England villages. It has no manufactures of any sort, neither shoes nor cotton, nor boxes, nor barrels, nor watches, nor furniture; it is still a farming-town, such as you find in the Massachusetts or New Hampshire hills, and is not yet a market-gardening town like those which lie nearer the city. The ancestral meadows are still mown by the great-great-grandchildren of those who cleared them of the primeval forest, and who, having begun to build into fences and bury in the earth the granite boulders plentifully bestrewing its surface, invented rather than discovered their reluctant fertility. In many parts of New England the Western jokes about sharpening the sheep's noses for their greater convenience in getting at the herbage between the rocks, and about firing the seed-corn into the ground with a shot-gun, do not seem so grotesquely imaginative. More than once at nightfall, as I drove along country roads, the flocks and herds, lying under the orchard trees, have turned on nearer inspection to companies of boulders; in the hill towns I have seen stone walls six feet wide, titanic barriers thrown up in the farmer's despair of otherwise getting rid of the stones scattered over his fields; and these gifts of the glacial period are often interred by the ton in pits dug for the purpose. It is said that the soil thus twice conquered from the wilderness is very rich and strong, and Lexington was by no means so barren originally as some other towns; but its fertility must once have been greater than it now is, or else people must once

have been satisfied with less fertility to the acre than contents them at present, for I could not see any agricultural reason why Lexington should first have been known as Cambridge Farms. Doubtless the name did not imply that it was the fittest part of the township for farming; Beverly Farms and Salem Farms and Cambridge Farms must have all been so called because they were hamlets remote from the principal village. At any rate Lexington once formed part of our university town, but was set off long before the revolutionary days in which it achieved a separate celebrity.

In New England the 'town' is the township, and there are some 'towns' in which there is no village at all; but at Lexington there was early a little grouping of houses; and for two hundred and fifty years the local feeling has been growing more and more intense, until it can be said at last to be now somewhat larger than the place. This is not an uncommon result; as Dr. Holmes has remarked, American cities and villages all like to think of themselves as the 'good old' this and that; but at Lexington more than anywhere else out of Italy I felt that the village was to its people the *patria*. With us the great Republic is repeated and multiplied in several smaller and diminishing republican governments, each subordinate to the larger, all over the land; and ever since its separation from Cambridge, Lexington has, like other New England towns, had its little autonomy. Twice a year the citizens convene and legislate in town meetings; and three Selectmen annually chosen see that the popular will is carried out and transact the whole business of the town government. This microcosm of democracy is the more interesting in Lexington because it is in many things an image of what the New England town was a hundred years ago—a sufficiently remote antiquity with us. The Irish have their foothold there as everywhere; but they have not acquired much land; and though they remain faithful Catholics, they have Americanised in such degree that it is hard to know some of them from ourselves in their slouching and nasal speech. As for the Canadian French, who abound in the valley of the Connecticut, and in all the factory towns, I saw none of them in Lexington, and there are no Germans.

It is because of the typically New England character of Lexington village, as well as its historical note, that I ask English readers to be interested in it; and as we Americans are sometimes grieved by our cousins' imperfect recollection of the family troubles, I make haste to remind them that at Lexington the first blood was shed in

the war of American Independence. It has a powerful hold upon the American imagination for this reason; it has therefore overloaded the gazetteer with namesakes in every part of the Union, and its celebrity is chief part of the first historical knowledge imparted to American schoolboys. But the village has such a charm for me from its actual loveliness and quaintness, that I should be sorry to bring that bloody spectre of the past into the foreground of any picture, and I shall blink it as long as I can.

It was a shrewish afternoon late in April when we arrived from Boston at the odd but very pleasant hotel where we spent our month of May. The season was very dry, and the bare landscape showed scarce a sign of spring. At that time there is usually a half-scared, experimental-looking verdure on our winter-beaten fields; but except where a forlorn hope of grass cowered in some damp hollow, the meadows were now as brown and haggard in aspect as they are when the great snows leave them in mid-March, and they lie gaunt and wasted under a high, vast blue sky, full of an ironical glitter of sunshine. The wind was sharp, and for many weary weeks yet there would be no buds on the elms that creaked overhead along the village street.

Further north, in Maine and Canada, the spring comes with a bound after the thaw; but the region of Boston seems to me the battle-ground of all the seasons when the spring is nominally in possession. On the 18th of May this year we had a soft, sunny morning, which clouded under an east wind; a cold rain set in before noon, with hail; it snowed the greater part of the afternoon, and we had an Italian sunset to the singing of the robins. This was excessive; but usually after the first relenting days the winter returns, and whips the fields with sleet and snow, storm after storm; and this martyrdom follows upon a succession of frosts and thaws, which began before Thanksgiving in November. Finally the east wind comes in, fretting the nerves and chilling the marrow, throughout April and May; even when it does not blow it remains in the air, a sentiment of icebergs and freezing sea. It is worst, of course, on the shore, and delicate people who cannot live in it there are sent to Lexington, and thrive. The air is very dry and pure, and that is perhaps the reason why even the east wind is tolerable. Lexington Common, they say, is as high as the top of Bunker Hill Monument in Boston; and the locomotive pants with difficulty up the heavy grade of the road near the village. Perhaps there is something in the grouping of the low hills—in the embrace of which the village lies on an ample plain—that gives it peculiar

shelter; it is certain that beyond the eastern range there is practically another climate. This is not saying that the winter is not long and dreary there; the snows lie deep in the hollows of those hills for months, and clog the long street on which the village houses are chiefly set.

Streets branch off from this thoroughfare to the right and left; but it is the newer houses which are built on these, and the more characteristic dwellings, as well as the old-fashioned shops, face the westward road along which Major Pitcairne's red-coats marched in the early April morning a hundred years ago to destroy the Provincial stores at Concord. Here and there before you reach the village is a large old mansion rambling with successive out-houses a hundred feet back from the road or beside it, all the buildings under one roof, and having a comfortable unity and snugness; but the dwellings in the village are small and very simple, generally of but two stories, and placed each in its separate little plot of ground. Where they pretend to the dignity of mansions, they stand

Somewhat back from the village street,

like the old-fashioned country-seat in Longfellow's poem, and have stately elms and burly maples about them; but they are mostly set close upon the road, as seems to have been everywhere the early custom in New England. They are all of wood—there are but two brick buildings in Lexington,—and here and there one is still painted saffron, with Paris-green shutters and white window casings—the colour of Longfellow's house and the other colonial houses in Cambridge. When the paint is not too freshly renewed, they have a suggestion of antiquity which is pleasing and satisfactory in so new a world as ours. There is no attempt at ornamentation in these unassuming houses at Lexington; that is left to the later carpentry which has produced on the intersecting streets various examples, in one story and a half, of the mansard architecture so popular in our wood-built suburbs. There is also at one point of the principal street a wooden 'block,' in emulation of the conventional American city block of brick or stone; but otherwise Lexington has escaped the ravages alike of 'tastiness' and of enterprise, and is as plain and sober a little town as it was fifty years ago. There are old-fashioned shops in rows, quite different from the 'block,' with wooden awnings to shelter their doorways, and with well-gnawed rails and horse-posts before them; there is an old tavern dating from the days when all

the transportation was by stage and waggon along the good hard roads; there are several churches of a decent and wholesome ugliness; and there are everywhere trees and grass and vines and flowers. The village is conscientiously clean; but except in mid-summer the English reader must imagine a bareness impossible in an English hamlet. We have no evergreen vines; the spruces and firs which we plant about our houses only emphasise the nakedness of all the other trees in winter; in the clear, cold air the landscape is as blank and open as a good conscience. The village, when the leaves fall, will be honestly of whatever colour it is painted, and its outlines will be as destitute of 'atmosphere' as if they were in the moon. There is no soft discoloration of decay in roof or wall; at the best you will have a weather-beaten gray.

Lexington has a High-School house of wood upon the model of a Grecian temple; but the principal public building is the Town Hall, a shapely structure of brick, which has been put up within the last five or six years, and which unites under one roof, a hall for town meetings, elections, and all sorts of civic, social and artistic entertainments, the town offices, and the free town library. The number of books is uncommonly large and exceedingly well chosen, and the collection is the gift of a lady of the place; the library is named after her, but it is piously dedicated in an inscription over the door to the men of Lexington who fell in the first battle with the British in 1775, and in the many fields of our late civil war. Statues of John Hancock and Sam Adams, the patriots who had fled from arrest in Boston, and were in hiding at Lexington the night before the affair of 1775, occupy niches in the rotunda from which the library opens, and confront figures of a provincial Minute-Man and of a national volunteer beside the door. Three days in the week the library is open from one till nine o'clock, and then there is a continual coming and going of the villagers on foot, and the neighbouring farmer-folks in buggies and carryalls. I noticed that these frequenters of the library, who thronged the reading-room, and kept the young lady at the desk incessantly busy recording the books they borrowed and returned, were mostly young people and mostly women. The women in fact are the miscellaneous readers in our country; they make or leave unmade most literary reputations; and I believe that it is usually by their advice when their work-worn fathers and husbands turn from their newspapers to the doubtful pleasure of a book. This is the case alike in city and country as regards lighter literature; and in small towns these devourers of novels

and travels and magazines read so close to the bone, that sometimes being brought personally to book for my intentions in this or that passage, I have preferred to adopt their own interpretations; and when this copy of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE is laid upon the table of the town library at Lexington, I am aware that I shall not be safe from my readers in any tortuous subtlety of phrase, but that they will search me out to the finest meaning of my commas, and the last insinuation of my semicolons. But I have a good conscience and I am not afraid.

Some friends, who compassionated the extremity of an author with an unfinished novel on his hands in the penetrating disquiet of a country hotel, lent me the keys to the Town Hall, and I had the library to myself on the days when it was not open to the public, and wrote there every morning amid the books, and the memorials of Lexington's great day, and every sort of colonial bric-a-brac. On one side of the door was the gun carried by a Provincial (whose name I read whenever I lifted my eyes from my work, and now marvel that I should have forgotten) during the fight, and which being 'brought back from Concord busted,' was thriftily sawed off just short of the fracture and afterwards used by his descendants; on the other side was a musket taken from the body of a British soldier who fell in the retreat; the sign of the old Monroe Tavern, where Earl Percy made his head-quarters when he came out to support Major Pitcairne's men, swung from the ceiling near these trophies; in glass cases on my right were collections of smaller relics, including shot from Percy's cannon, the tongue of the bell that called the villagers from their slumbers the night before the attack; the pistols, richly chased and mounted, from which Pitcairne fired the first bullet in the war that made us two peoples; the hanger worn by the sexton when he went to light the signal lantern for Paul Revere in the belfry of the Old North Church in Boston, and sent him galloping out on his midnight ride through the sleeping land with the news that the King's troops had begun their march on Concord; the broadside issued in the British interest giving an account of the day's fight; with divers shoe-buckles, rings, knives, platters, and profiles cut out of black paper, belonging to the colonial period. No motive of patriotism shall induce me to represent these collections as very rich, or in themselves very interesting, and I am aware that I cannot give them great adventitious importance by grouping them with the rude writing-desk of one of the old Puritan ministers of Lexington, or the foot-stove which one of his congregation probably carried to

meeting, and warmed his poor feet with while he thawed his imagination at the penal fires painted as the last end of sinners in the sermon; the sincere home-made lantern of a later date, and the spinning-wheel of an uncertain epoch do not commend themselves to me as much more hopeful material for an effective picture. But all the more pathetic from their paucity did I find these few and simple records of the hard, laborious past of the little town, which flowered after a century's toil and privation into an hour of supreme heroism. For whatever may be the several minds of my readers and myself concerning their right, there can be no question between us that it was sublime for forty unwarlike farmers to stand up and take the fire of six hundred disciplined troops in defence of what they believed their right: it was English to do that, it was American, and these plain martyr-folk were both. 'I own that I sympathised with the piety that has treasured every relic connected, however remotely, with that time; and that I took an increasing pleasure in showing off the trophies to such comers as tried the library door when nobody had any right there but myself. I was quite master to let them in or not, but I always opened, and waited for them to overcome their polite reluctance to disturb me at my writing. Their questions succeeded upon a proper interval of fidgetting and whispering, and then I confirmed orally all the written statements of the placards on the objects, and found my account in listening to the laudable endeavours of my visitors to connect their family history somehow with them. They were people of all ages and conditions; but they all had these facts by heart, and were proud of them; though with a pride unqualified by any foolish rancour. Most of all they were interested in the portrait of a young and handsome British officer in the uniform of the last century, whose sensitive face looks down from the library wall upon the records of the fight; and when I said that this was a portrait of Earl Percy, who commanded the British artillery, and explained (as I am afraid I have not the right to explain fully here) how it came to be given to a gentleman of Lexington by the present Duke of Northumberland, I elicited nothing but praises of the Earl's good looks or expressions of satisfaction that his portrait should be there. No one apparently regarded him as out of sympathy with themselves, and I believe indeed that this generous foe acted only as a soldier on that day, and thought the measures used against the Provincials neither wise nor just. One small boy dwelt upon the portrait with delays that passed even the patriotic patience of the *cicerone*, and left it at last with a sigh of gratified

wonder. 'And *he* was a Britisher!' I give his language because, contrary to the experience of English observers among us, I never heard any other American say Britisher; and this small boy was unmistakably of Irish parentage.

The hotel in which we stayed had a characteristically American history, though it could not relate itself in any way to the revolutionary fame of Lexington, as I fancied most buildings in Lexington would have liked to do. It was the house put up by the commonwealth of Massachusetts for the use of its officers and agents at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, in Philadelphia; when the exhibition ended, the house was sold to a citizen of Lexington, who took it down piecemeal, and brought it round by ship to Boston, whence it was forwarded by rail to Lexington, and reconstructed there. This was a simpler and easier process than first appears; for the edifice was what we call a shell; it was not plastered, and the several portions being marked and numbered were easily put together again. I believe that as a speculation the removal and re-building did not pay; but when the house was rendered winter-proof, and heated with steam, it became at once the most picturesque and delightful country hotel. Outwardly it abounded in porches, in broken roofs and gables, and inwardly it was huge and rambling, with unexpected staircases and passages, and chambers of all manner of shapes and sizes, lit with transoms of coloured glass; but its most charming feature was the vast hall, running the whole length of the building and occupying the greater part of the ground floor. You entered this from the street, and wandered about in it at will till someone in authority accidentally discovered you there, and having directed you to the hotel register lying open on the piano, assigned you a room; so vague and slight in everything was the conformity to ordinary hotel usage in that pleasant house. It was like arriving at some enchanted castle; or, if it were not, so much the worse for the enchanted castle. Enchanted castles, or even those of another sort, had not a railroad, as our hotel had, at their postern gate,—a railroad that was on domestic and almost affectionate terms with us all. When the trains came scuffling and wheezing up the incline from Boston, the sound was as if the friendly locomotive were mounting the back stairs, and might be expected to walk in without ceremony, and sit down at the fire like any other boarder. We could see the trains backing and filling at the station as we sat at breakfast, and such of us as were going to town could time ourselves to the last half-minute, and count upon some sympathetic delay when we were late. Satur-

day evening, the trains all drew in with the air of having done an honest week's work, and the engines having run their empty cars up the siding, found their way to the locomotive house at their leisure, as if they were going to wash up there for Sunday, while a Sabbath peace settled with the nightfall upon the village.

I dare say I shall not be able, in this much-served England, to make it plain that our Lexington hotel was charming almost in proportion to the wide freedom granted every comer of taking care of himself; yet it was largely on account of this rather slipshod ease that it was so pleasant. In the end one was very comfortable: the beds were good, the rooms were clean, the table was plentiful; you had what you wanted if you would take the trouble to get it, and much more than half the time it was got for you. Moreover you were breveted partner in the enterprise with a hearty good-will that could not have been bought for money, and with so much amiability, and so much real regard for your welfare, that you must have been a very extraordinary American indeed if you did not willingly accept the situation as you found it. A fire was burning all the month of May in the prodigious fireplace midway of the hall at our hotel; and if neither host nor servitor came after a reasonable time to receive the stranger, some hospitable boarder rose from the circle about the hearth, and welcomed him to one of the great Shaker rocking-chairs before the fire, while he went in search of the housekeeper or ostler. The fireplace would take in a back-log big enough to smoulder and inwardly burn for days, and it had a stomach for the largest stumps from the neighbouring fields, which it devoured together with all blocks and fragments too tough for the axe and wedge. Sometimes, as the landlord remarked, there was more wood than fire; but ordinarily a roaring blaze was not wanting, and with this, and the elk's head and antlers on the chimney-piece, the armour (brought home by one of the boarders from some joust with a bric-a-brac dealer abroad) on the opposite wall, and all the rude gothic of the architecture, which showed the beams and rafters as in a Venetian palace, we had very little difficulty in feeling baronial. It was probably a mistaken emotion; and I am not prepared to defend its genuineness against all comers. The ladies used to bring out their sewing or knitting, and chat round the fire; the men had their newspapers and cigars; as the evening wore on there was whist or euchre at the tables; sometimes people from the outside world dropped in; and if you went down late (as hours go with us in the country) you were likely to find the landlord and his brother smoking before the fire and

telling stories of Lexington as they remembered it when boys. They were born on that spot, their family had owned the land for two hundred years, and they loved their native place with a tenderness very uncommon among Americans. I remember from those drowsy hours many stories, as of the frenzy of a family cat amidst the pyrotechnic rejoicings of a Fourth of July, and the unseemly behaviour of a Lexington man's horse, who brought his owner to shame before a Boston audience by backing down stairs into a huckster's cellar in Dock Square; but I am withheld from repeating them here by that English scrupulosity regarding the facts of private life which I am naturally anxious to emulate in writing for an English magazine. I do not know whether I am bound by the same extreme of civilisation not to speak of the old lantern which the landlord sometimes showed to guests of a very exacting patriotism as the very lantern which Paul Revere carried on his midnight ride from Boston to Concord: they found nothing odd in the suggestion that he should have carried a lantern, and no hesitation in receiving the relic as historical.

The hall was the boarders' drawing-room when they were alone; and it was only when a sleighing party drove out from Boston in the winter, or a bicycling party arrived in the spring, that they reluctantly abandoned it to the dancing, and to the anguish of the piano which must ensue with or without the dancing. Here by day as well as by night there was easy loitering and talking amongst us, as if we were all guests in the house—as in fact we practically were; and here on one of those white, white Sunday mornings, when the humid warmth bursts from the suddenly open portals of the South, and under a sky all sun, every bud breaks into blossom with a bee in its heart, and the whole air quavers and tinkles with the notes of blue-birds and orioles, our languor was thrilled with the horror of the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke in Dublin. The crime was then but a few hours old, and it seemed to stain that exquisite Sabbath purity with blood. I think that throughout America we all felt it personally as we did Garfield's death, and that whether we hoped or whether we doubted for Ireland, we were alike dismayed at the cruel stupidity of the deed. The feeling of the hour comes back to me again in vivid association with the sensuous memory of that peculiarly American weather, of which I should perhaps try in vain to give a definite impression. It comes after long days of chilly drought, when the dust flies in the bitter east; overnight the wind changes, a warm rain falls, which dries

in the first hours of the sun climbing a lofty sky, absolutely without cloud, of more than Italian blueness and of such continental vastness as roofed the first home of our race on Asiatic plains. In such a day there is compensation for all that has gone before; the grass is thickly and brightly green; the cherry-trees and pear-trees whiten the world; the air is sweet with delicate scents, it palpitates with song. To-morrow may be like yesterday, but to-day is heavenly perfect.

We were still the same company in our hotel, when one day our evening paper brought us, fully reprinted, Mr. Matthew Arnold's recent 'Word about America.' It was a not wholly flattering word, but I do not think it could have been more amiably received if it had been so. The good-will of the writer was so evident that we all said it would not do to be vexed that he seemed not very well informed; the Americans are in fact so used to having their ribs walked over by foreigners in the heaviest boots of travel, that this slippered and rhythmic pace was like a sort of Hawaiian *lomi-lomi* to our toughened sensibilities; it tickled, it lulled us, it was almost a caress. The editor of our paper had warned us not to reject what truth there was in Mr. Arnold's 'Word,' and we set ourselves dutifully to seek it. We could not quite maintain with our compatriot, whose declaration seemed to have evoked the Word, that there was in every little American town a circle of cultivated people; at the most we could assert that there was a circle of people who *wished* they were cultivated, and cordially and modestly and intelligently appreciated cultivation; but at the bottom of our hearts we were aware of not being Murdstones, or even in an ill sense Methodists. This conception of us appeared to us lamentably mistaken; we could not so readily have proved that we were not in a low condition from the national tendency to irreverent humour; we have certainly a bad habit of laughing at serious things, even our critics; but at the same time we could not see how we could be so generally wanting in sweetness and light, and yet be so often Mr. Arnold's readers and admirers. Given English middle-class Puritanism, we ought logically to have been what he imagines us; the camel could not complain that it had not been scientifically evolved from the philosopher's consciousness; and yet it felt itself, in its dumb helplessness, to be quite a different sort of beast. I suppose this must be always somewhat the case; and heaven knows how the ancient Greeks and Hebrews like Mr.

Arnold's notions of them. I have myself attempted to say things of the English which have not been found just by the few English people who read them, and in fact I suppose it would be better to let each nation aggrieve its own. I shall not, therefore, presume to say that Mr. Arnold is right about the English middle class; but if we are like what he conceives of them, I should say yes, we are perhaps the English middle class, but with the lid off. This appears to me an advantage.

At any rate this was the sum of the talk over Mr. Arnold's paper among the boarders of the Massachusetts House in Lexington. It was a purely fortuitous assemblage of people, such as one is apt to encounter at summer hotels in New England. They were of various complexions as regarded creeds and callings; but neither their creeds nor callings appeared to characterise them; they kept their individualities free and apart from the accidents of business and belief, in a way that I own I should be somewhat at a loss to explain. There were Unitarians, Episcopalians, Swedenborgians, Orthodox Congregationalists, and, for all I know, Baptists among them, but I think no Methodists; and of that numerous and respectable sect there happens to be no congregation in Lexington. There is a Unitarian church, which was formerly the prevailing faith; the Orthodox church is earnest and growing; there is a large Irish Catholic church; but the greatest advance has been made by the Baptists, under the ministrations of a lay-preacher, formerly a colonel in the Union army, who has lately reconstituted that body out of very perishing fragments, and made it strong and flourishing. I heard it said that he had done this by rendering the church 'attractive to young people.' There is very little religious excitement of any sort in New England, now; the church in small places becomes more and more a social affair; and perhaps it was chiefly in the social way that the Baptist body was rehabilitated in Lexington.

It was our good fortune to be there on Decoration Day, the anniversary when all over the country the Americans of both sections decorate with flags and flowers the graves of those who fell in the Civil War, and the soldiers who have since died. In the cities the day is celebrated with civic pomp, with parades of militia and steam fire-engines; but in the villages its observance is an act of religion, of domestic piety; and it is touching, after the day is past, to see the garlands withering in the lonely country graveyards, and the little flags feebly fluttering about the graves till the weather quite wears them away. Every year the graves

increase in number and the soldiers are fewer and fewer who come to lay the flowers on them; and it is in the country that this waste of life is most sorrowfully noticeable. At Lexington, two new graves had been added to those of the year before, and of the young men who went to the war from the town only a score of middle-aging veterans remained. These facts were touched upon in the address with which the ceremonies of the day were closed in the Town Hall at night, and the sad and glorious associations of the past were invoked by a speaker who had himself been part of those great events. He was now the Unitarian minister of the village, and he had been preceded in prayer by the Orthodox Congregational minister; the gentleman, by the way, through whom the Duke of Northumberland presented Lord Percy's portrait to the town. There was excellent singing by a choir of men's voices; and for the rest there was very earnest attention on the part of the people who filled the hall to overflowing. The audience was not of unmixed Yankee race; the Irish quarter of Lexington was duly represented, but all were one in a sense of the gravity of the occasion, and the whole assembly was subdued, old and young alike, to a Puritanic seriousness of demeanour. It is sometimes a little amusing to find how aptly the Irish settled in the rural communities of New England take on the prevailing type of manners; they are perhaps, with the Celtic conception of democracy, that 'one man is as good as another and a dale better too,' a little more American in some things than the natives themselves; but it appears to be their ambition to conform as closely as possible to our social ideal. The imitation is by no means superficial; they are industrious and thrifty, and except that they unfailingly vote for whatever is illiberal and retrograde in politics, they are not bad citizens in such communities, whatever they are in the larger towns. I was not near enough to the veterans occupying the front benches to see how many were of Irish birth; but it is known how well they served in the army; and I dare say no one present took greater satisfaction in the expressions relating the second war for freedom to the part Lexington had borne in the struggle against England. The Revolution was remembered in the special decoration of the statues of Adams and Hancock and the Minute-Man with wreaths of hemlock and pine, which, in a season that denied the usual profusion of flowers, did duty for them throughout the day.

One night we had a concert in the Town Hall, which was so curiously American as regards the artists that I wish I could give

a thoroughly intelligible idea of the affair. They were all of one family—father, mother, and nine children between nineteen and five years old—two children younger still being left at home out of regard to their tender age. They were from utmost Oregon, and they had gone about the whole country, singing and playing, apparently ever since any of the children could walk. They had visited the White House in Washington, and had been very acceptable everywhere to Sunday schools and scrupulous pleasure-seekers because of the edifying character of their entertainments, which were certainly exemplary from the moral side. I cannot say much as to the artistic quality of their programme; it commended itself by dealing with those themes of domestic and obituary interest in which our balladry delights; it was varied with a very little very modest dancing, and sketches of infantine drama; but they were nevertheless gifted people, and while they conformed to the popular taste in their performances, they were all working hard at the science of their profession under a German master. They stopped at our hotel, and we had the advantage of seeing them in private as well as in public, and of witnessing the triumph of the family among them over the temptations of their difficult and hazardous experiment; the young people were quiet and well-mannered; the little ones far less spoiled than might have been expected of babes encored several times every night; and there was a spirit of mutual affection and of discipline manifest in them which I should like to claim as characteristic of the American family under less arduous conditions. The father talked freely of his theories for maintaining a home-life in his nomadic tribe; and the author sojourning in the hotel did not think the less of his methods when he said he had read the author's books, and introduced his children as versed in them. This author had long had his ideas of what those novels, those travels, those unsaleable poems, those intheatricable dramas, rightly understood, might do for mankind, and here

I was very glad that the Lexington people gave the singing and playing family a good house, and I fancy that they do not refuse any fit occasions for amusing themselves. The young men seem not to go away from home so generally as they do from most country towns in New England; it is perhaps because their pleasant village is so near the city; at any rate they remain at home even after being graduated at Harvard. They have sleigh rides, and dances at the Town Hall during the winter; I was told that the Lexington 'germans' are not despised by the under-

graduates of Cambridge ; and ‘ Oh, I tell you,’ I heard it said by one of themselves, ‘ the Lexington girls have a good time !’ In the summer there are of course picnics, and of late riding has come greatly into vogue in the country all about Boston. The rigours of our winters and summers are against that pleasure, and hitherto it was almost unknown ; but now, thanks largely to the importation of Texan riding-horses, it is especially prevalent at Lexington. These horses, which are small, are very strong and tough, and they look like little thoroughbreds. Like all Southern horses, they are broken to walk very rapidly, and they have in perfection that gait which in the south-west is called a *lope*. When they are first brought north they sell for prices ranging from \$40 to \$100, or eight to twenty pounds. Their popularity has revived the sport, almost obsolete in the north, of horse-racing at Lexington, where I once saw a race between gentlemen riders, which had apparently called out the greater part of the population. We drove through miles of the small pine forest, which growing up all over New England on the exhausted lands, gives such an impression of wildness ; and came at last to a space in the woods where a track had been newly laid out in the white birch scrub, or newly recovered from it, and where we found everything prepared for the sport in due form. The riders gave us all the gaiety of jockey dress, as well as the race, for our money ; the ground was thronged with carriages and buggies ; there was a tally-ho coach which had been driven out from Boston, and I went about bewildered at this transformation of my poor New England, and fearfully hoping there was nothing wicked in so much apparent enjoyment with no apparent useful purpose, till I heard myself indicated in a whisper as ‘ one of the horse-men.’ Then I desperately abandoned myself to the common dissipation, for it was idle to be better than one seemed.

These Texan horses, which are not quite the mustangs of the prairies, are ridden with high-pommeled, wooden-stirruped Mexican saddles ; and when a party of young people dashed by the hotel in the twilight, it was with a picturesqueness which the pig-skin of Anglo-Saxon civilisation fails to impart to a man. But let me not give the impression of mere pleasure-taking on the part of these cavaliers ; they were students at law or medicine, or they were young men of business recreating themselves after the close application of a day in town ; by-and-by, when they were married, they would content themselves with their cigars and their newspapers, and leave others to ride with pretty girls in the dusk of

the evening, or chase the flying tennis-ball on the whitewashed lawn. Except perhaps at Newport, or the New York clubs, one sees few men of leisure with us, and the example of these few is not one to make the Republic pine for that leisure class which the Old World finds indispensable to its government and refinement. Women of leisure we certainly have; they distinguish and adorn us everywhere, advancing (as we understand) the standard of dress abroad, and absorbing and diffusing ideas of taste and culture at home. Wherever the piano-forte penetrates, lovely woman lifts her fingers from the needle, the broom-handle, and the washboard, and places them on its keys, never again to be restored to those odious implements; she finds that she has a mind, and she makes her husband or her father pay for it; she begins to have aims, to draw, to model, to decorate, to lecture, and to render herself self-supporting by every expensive device. This alone is enough to keep the men of her family busy, and to prevent the commonwealth from lapsing into decay; the civic virtues fall naturally to the care of the trained patriots who are 'inside politics'

I perceive too late that by an infrangible chain of reasoning I have been proving that we too are governed and refined by a leisure class, and that there is only the trifling difference of sex between the American and the European aristocracies. At the same time I have got rather far away from Lexington, where life seemed to be still very unambitious and old-fashioned. I wish I could say that it was cheap; but this is not the case in the suburbs of any of our Atlantic cities. House rent is certainly less, but the railroad fares and the express-man's charges go far to equalise that with the city rate; about Boston the suburban taxes are sometimes greater than the city taxes; provisions and service are a little costlier, and unless one conforms quite strictly to the local standard of simplicity, one is apt to live quite as expensively as in town. It would cost as much to live with the same ease in Lexington as in Boston; that is to say, a third more than in London. But one is not obliged to live with 'ease' there, and he may live in comfort for a reasonable sum. It struck me that the place had studied convenience scientifically, and that in a modest way it was entirely sufficient to itself, with its good schools, its admirable library, its well-kept streets and roads; its sociable little line of railroad connecting it with the city by ten or twelve trains a day; its well-stocked provision stores, and its variety of other shops. There cannot be many

more than a thousand people in the village, including the Irish hamlet by the railroad side; but it is lighted with gas, and they are talking of waterworks. I dare say they will soon have drainage and malaria.

The village of Lexington, however, is not one of those examples of rapid growth with which we like to astonish the world. I doubt if it can be more than twice as populous as when a hundred years ago it became the scene of the brief conflict which has made it memorable. Our hotel fronted the road along which the King's troops had marched in the twilight of the morning of April 19, 1775, and on which they retreated in the afternoon. The common where the encounter with the Provincials took place was but a minute's walk away, and with the relics of the library close at hand, we dwelt, as it were, in the midst of heroic memories. One pleasant forenoon, when the May had remitted its worst rigours, and nature was making the most, with birds and sunshine, of a respite from the east wind, we strolled up to the pretty green, and leaning upon the rail that encloses it, listened to the story of the fight from one who had all but been present in his careful and enthusiastic studies of its details.

The green is an irregular triangle fronted by the village churches and dwellings, and the historic fact is commemorated by a rude monument erected at the close of the last century, with an inscription by the minister of the village: a good man who seemed to have learned his rhetoric from the French Republic, then distributing equality and fraternity to the reluctant peoples of Europe at the point of the bayonet. The stone is 'sacred to liberty, independence, and the rights of man;' it rehearses in swelling terms the wrongs endured from British tyranny by the colonists, and their resort to arms. 'The contest was long, bloody and affecting: righteous Heaven approved the solemn appeal,' and the sovereignty of the States was the final consequence. The great-grandchildren of those who fell there look from their windows upon the consecrated spot; not far up a street to the northward the house yet stands in which Adams and Hancock were hiding, with a price set on their heads by the British commandant in Boston, while Major Pitcairne's troops were marching up the Concord road; and three of the houses that witnessed the bloodshed on the green seem to be still strong and sound, and good for another hundred years. They are all interesting as specimens of the early village architecture of New England, and one is especially quaint and picturesque, with a

pretty, old-fashioned garden beside it, where the flowers defied the May in a sort of embattled bloom. This was the Buckner Tavern at the time of the fight, and it was even then an old house — of the seventeenth century, as the beams in the parlour ceiling still show. It afforded a rendezvous for the Provincials when the alarm of the British approach was first sounded by Paul Revere, and there most of the men lingered and waited subject to their captain's orders, after he had begun to doubt the truth of the rumour. The interval must have been trying to those unwarlike men, but they all answered the drum when a messenger galloped up with the news that the King's troops were right upon them. Some of them had gone to bed again in their homes beside the green, and they left their wives and children sleeping almost within sound of a whisper from the spot where they loosely formed on the grass before their doors. They were very simple and quiet folks, with no long perspective of national glory to embolden and sustain them in the resistance they were about to offer their King: a name at which we do not trouble ourselves to laugh now, but which was then to be feared next to God's. Independence was scarcely dreamt of; all that the villagers were clear of was their right as Englishmen, and they stood there upon that, with everything else around them in a dark far thicker than the morning gloom out of which the red-coats flashed at the other corner of the green. Major Pitcairne called a halt at some thirty rods, and riding forward swore at the damned rebels, and bade them disperse. They stood firm, and he ordered his men to fire; the soldiers hesitated; but when he drew his pistols and emptied them at the Provincials, they discharged a volley, and eight of our people fell. They were not a tithe of the enemy in number, and it is doubtful if they returned the fire; their captain called a retreat, and those who were unhurt made their escape, to join later in the long running fight through which the Provincials all day harassed the flight of the British from Concord back to Boston. Major Pitcairne had dispersed a riot, and had shed the first blood in a seven years' war. The dead men lay on the grass where their children had played a few hours before; one, shot through the breast, dragged himself a little space to his own threshold and died there in the arms of his wife.

Many stories are told of the peaceful inexperience of these people who had defied a mighty empire. A few of them had been in what we call the Old French War, and had served under Wolfe at the taking of Quebec; but it was so little understood generally

that war meant fighting, that some boys came to the common that morning as to a sort of muster, and only retired when the bullets whistled over their heads. After the encounter at Concord, where an hour or two later—

The embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world,

the popular education in the art of war proceeded rapidly ; though even then one of our men who was unsuspectingly firing from behind a stone wall at the British column in the road, had the surprise and mortification to be himself shot in the back by a flanking party. Before noon the retreat from Concord had become a rout, that was not arrested till Earl Percy arrived at Lexington with twelve hundred men and two pieces of cannon. The whole country side was up ; the Minute-Men from Acton, Concord, Menotomy, Lexington, and Cambridge were joined by those of Woburn, Billerica, and even some of the seaboard towns, in pursuing the King's troops. The season was so unusually advanced that the cherry trees were in bloom ; the day was one of that sudden and sickening heat that sometimes occurs in our spring ; and when the troops met Percy's supporting column at the Monroe Tavern, many of them fell down in the dust, 'with their tongues lolling out like dogs.' They had fought a running fight for ten miles, and they had marched in all nearly thirty since they left Boston the night before. Percy's cannon scared away the riflemen who hung upon their rear, and his men, scattering over the country, fired the farmhouses that might be supposed to afford shelter to the Minute-Men. Some of the houses were beyond gunshot, and the sick and old who were here and there bayoneted in them would perhaps now have been spared. The word had gone about that the Americans were scalping the English dead, and something had to be done in retaliation ; no soldiers were found scalped, but a good many farmhouses were burned ; for when Percy began to retire, the shooting from the walls and the woods along the road began again, and continued throughout the retreat. At different points on the route stones have been set up to commemorate the acts of reprisal committed by the soldiers : here stood a house burned by the British ; in another house three Americans were massacred ; in another twelve, and so forth. One of these monuments, in Arlington (then Menotomy), celebrates the valour and final perseverance of one of the patriots in terms that used to amuse me in spite of the gravity of the facts. 'On this spot, Samuel Whittemore, aged 81, killed three

British soldiers. He was shot, beaten, bayoneted, and left for dead, but recovered, and lived to be 98 years old.' My readers may differ with me as to the political principles of this hoary man, but there can be but one opinion concerning his resolution and physical toughness.

We have counted it all joy in our annals that we were able to embitter defeat to the British in the pursuit from Concord to Boston, and have of course made the most of their reprisals. But perhaps these did not appear to them such enormities. To be fired on from every covert by the roadside, and helplessly slaughtered by a people they despised, was a thing that must have had its exasperations; and they responded in the way that might have been expected. 'War is cruel, madam,' General Sherman explained to the lady who came out from Atlanta to reproach him for bombarding a town where so many non-combatants must suffer; and our race, whether English or American, has never 'made war with water of roses.' The British had succeeded in the object of their expedition; they had destroyed the Provincial stores at Concord; but they lost that day more men than it cost them to capture Quebec. The day is only a chapter of history now. We are tender and proud of it, because it is our own, and because it vindicated us, and proved us after the fashion of war in the right. But if there have been griefs between the two countries that no dilution of 'the language of Shakespeare and Milton' can wash out the memory of, there is scarcely a pang in them any more. Meanwhile we are still very far apart, and after all that cables and steamships can do, there are three thousand miles of sea, and immeasurable gulfs of Democracy between us. With a few exceptions on either side, we heartily dislike and distrust each other's civic and social ideas. England Americanises in some respects, in some respects America Anglicises; but the most of that amounts to very little, I suspect; and for our part, whatever outcry we make over our own follies and sins and errors, we do not believe that it is less democracy, but more, that is to help us. Mere contiguity might do something to reconcile the ideals of the two countries, but it could not do everything. The four millions of Canada are not affected by the proximity of our fifty millions; they cling all the more closely to the English ideal, or what they imagine it to be, and shudder at the spectre of annexation, which exists only in their own nervous abhorrence.

At the same time, there is apt to be so much kindness between us personally when we meet on any common ground, that it is diffi-

cult to realise the national alienation, and impossible to account for it. We seem so very much alike—I necessarily speak only for the American half of the impression—that we feel like asserting an indisputable brotherhood. Upon reflection we have our reserves, our doubts, our fears; but for the time the illusion is delightfully perfect. It occurs with Americans, sometimes not only upon acquaintance or speech with Englishmen, but at the mere sight of their faces, which have a kindred look, whatever their calling or degree; and I think we are never less wrapped in the national flag than when we encounter English soldiers. The other day I was walking through one of the Parks when I came upon some sort of little barrack, where two or three privates, being temporarily debarred from flirtation with the nursery maids by the duty they were on, presented themselves purely and simply as my traditional enemies. But so far from wishing to offer them battle, I could only think of that whimsical and remorseful passage of Hawthorne's 'Septimius Felton,' in which he describes Pitcairne's men as they marched into Concord after the affair at Lexington, dusty, wearied and footsore, but 'needing only a half-hour's rest, a good breakfast, and a pot of beer apiece, to make them ready to face the world. Nor did their faces look in any way rancorous, but at the most only heavy, cloddish, good-natured, and humane. "Oh heavens, Mr. Felton!" whispered Rose; "why should we shoot these men, or they us? They look kind, if homely." "It is the strangest thing in the world that we should think of killing them," said Septimius.'

Indeed it was monstrous. I realised then as never before the tremendous moral disadvantage a democracy is at in any war with a royal or oligarchic power; for whereas a portion of the Republican idea is slain in every American who perishes on the field, the poor fellows who fall on the other side personally express nothing, while the real enemy remains safe at home. It was no longer a question of shooting at the King and his ministers from behind stone walls, as it had been hitherto, but of picking off such amiable and friendly-looking folk as those I saw. Something in my heart—no doubt the brother plebeian—stirred in their presence with a novel pain; and if I could have hoped to make these honest men in anywise cognisant of April 19, 1775, I might have wished to excuse it to them.

W. D. HOWELLS.

‘*Departed.*’

W. M. A.—died April 20, 1882.

I.

DEPARTED—never more to go or come ;
 Leaving men’s moans and gibes, and sighs and grins,
 Their unblest’d blessings, unrepented sins ;—
 Departed from among us and gone home !
 Thou look’st no more with us on yon blue dome ;
 Thy laugh no more rings out like these glad rills
 That break the purple silence of the hills,
 Decking the hard, rough rocks with dazzling foam ;
 As thou so many years didst deck our lives
 With thy bright patience, and the strength which strives
 To know God’s will and do it, however sore.
 Sweet soul ! that to the pure heart of a boy
 Joined a man’s power, to suffer and enjoy.
 Six feet in earth we laid thee—and all’s o’er !

II.

Not o'er ! Forbid it, all ye infinite deeps
Of sky and sea, hills set in amber air :
Why should God make this outward world so fair,
If souls who love Him, He nor loves nor keeps,
But lets slip from Him into deathly sleeps
Of cold corruption ? And thee most of all,
Who heard, long ere *we* heard it ! the last call,
' Son, come up higher,' and through such silent steepes
Of pain toiled upwards to Him. Their desire
Those sure attain who righteously aspire :
Therefore adieu a little while—à *Dieu* !
To God we give thee, and to God we tend.
No tears ! *thou* wept'st not ; but expect us, friend,
In thy far land where the heavens and earth are new.

THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HALIFAX GENTLEMAN.'

ARRAN,
August 1882.

Our Origin[†] as a Species.

THERE seems to be a manifest desire in some quarters to anticipate the looked-for and, by some, hoped-for, proofs of our descent—or rather ascent—from the Ape.

In the September issue of the 'Fortnightly Review' a writer cites, in this relation, 'the Neanderthal skull, which possesses large bosses on the forehead, strikingly suggestive of those which give the gorilla its peculiarly fierce appearance;' and, he proceeds: 'No other human skull presents so utterly bestial a type as the Neanderthal fragment. If one cuts a female gorilla-skull in the same fashion the resemblance is truly astonishing, and we may say that the only human feature in the skull is its size.'¹

In testing the question as between Linnæus and Cuvier of the zoological value of the differences between lowest man and highest ape, a naturalist would not limit his comparison of a portion of the human skull with the corresponding one of a female ape, but would extend it to the young or immature gorilla, and also to the adult male: he would then find the generic and specific characters summed up, so far, at least, as a portion or 'fragment' of the skull might show them. What is posed as the 'Neanderthal skull' is the roof of the brain-case, or 'calvarium' of the anatomist, including the pent-house overhanging the eye-holes or 'orbits.' There is no other part of the fragment which can be supposed to be meant by the 'large bosses' of the above quotation. And, on this assumption, I have to state that the super-orbital ridge in the calvarium in question is but little more prominent than in certain human skulls of both higher and lower races, and of both the existing and cave-dwelling periods. It is a variable cranial character by no means indicative of race, but rather of sex.

Limiting the comparison to that on which the writer quoted bases his conclusions—apparently the superficial extent of the roof-plate—its greater extent as compared with that of a gorilla equalling, probably, in weight the entire frame of the individual

¹ Grant Allen, *On Primitive Man*, p. 314.

from the Neanderthal cave, is strongly significant of the superiority of size of brain in the cave-dweller. The inner surface moreover indicates the more complex character of the soft organ on which it was moulded: the precious 'grey substance' being multiplied by certain convolutions which are absent in the apes. But there is another surface which the unbiassed zoologist finds it requisite to compare. In the human 'calvarium' in question, the mid-line traced backward from the super-orbital ridge runs along a smooth tract. In the gorilla a ridge is raised from along the major part of that tract to increase the surface giving attachment to the biting muscles. Such ridge in this position varies only in height in the female and the male adult ape, as the specimens in the British Museum demonstrate. In the Neanderthal individual, as in the rest of mankind, the corresponding muscles do not extend their origins to the upper surface of the cranium, but stop short at the sides forming the inner wall or boundary of what are called the 'temples,' defined by Johnson as the 'upper part of the sides of the head,' whence our 'biting muscles' are called 'temporal,' as the side-bones of the skull to which they are attached are also the 'temporal bones.' In the superficial comparison to which Mr. Grant Allen has restricted himself, in bearing testimony on a question which perhaps affects our fellow-creatures, in the right sense of the term, more warmly than any other in human and comparative anatomy, the obvious difference just pointed out ought not to have been passed over. It was the more incumbent on one pronouncing on the paramount problem, because the 'sagittal ridge in the gorilla,' as in the orang, relates to and signifies the dental character which differentiates all *Quadrumana* from all *Bimana* that have ever come under the ken of the biologist. And this ridge much more 'strikingly suggests' the fierceness of the powerful brute-ape than the part referred to as 'large bosses.' Frontal prominences, more truly so termed, are even better developed in peaceful, timid, graminivorous quadrupeds than in the skulls of man or of ape. But before noticing the evidence which the teeth bear on the physical relations of man to brute, I would premise that the comparison must not be limited to a part or 'fragment' of the bony frame, but to its totality, as relating to the modes and faculties of locomotion.

Beginning with the skull—and, indeed, for present aim, limiting myself thereto—I have found that a vertical longitudinal section brings to light in greatest number and of truest value the

differential characters between lowest *Homo* and highest *Simia*. Those truly and indifferently interested in the question may not think it unworthy their time—if it has not already been so bestowed—to give attention to the detailed discussions and illustrations of the characters in question in the second and third volumes of the ‘Transactions of the Zoological Society.’¹ The concluding Memoir, relating more especially to points of approximation in cranial and dental structure of the highest *Quadrumanæ* to the lowest *Bimane*, has been separately published.

I selected from the large and instructive series of human skulls of various races in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons that which was the lowest, and might be called most bestial, in its cranial and dental characters. It was from an adult of that human family of which the life-characters are briefly but truly and suggestively defined in the narrative of Cook’s first voyage in the ‘*Endeavour*.’²

Not to trespass further on the patience of my readers, I may refer to the ‘Memoir on the Gorilla,’ 4to, 1865. Plate XII. gives a view, natural size, of the vertical and longitudinal section of an Australian skull; Plate XI. gives a similar view of the skull of the gorilla. Reduced copies of these views may be found at p. 572, figs. 395, 396, vol. ii. of my ‘Anatomy of Vertebrates.’

As far as my experience has reached, there is no skull displaying the characters of a *Quadrumanous* species, as that series descends from the gorilla and chimpanzee to the baboon, which exhibits differences, osteal or dental, on which specific and generic distinctions are founded, so great, so marked, as are to be seen, and have been above illustrated, in the comparison of the highest ape with the lowest man.

The modification of man’s upper limbs for the endless variety, nicety, and perfection of their application, in fulfilment of the behests of his correspondingly developed brain—actions summed up in the term ‘manipulation’—testify as strongly to the same conclusion. The corresponding degree of modification of the human lower limbs, to which he owes his upright attitude, relieving the manual instruments from all share in station and terrestrial locomotion—combine and concur in raising the group

¹ ‘Osteological Contributions to the Natural History of the Orangs (*Pithecius*) and Chimpanzees (*Troglodites niger* and *Trog. Gorilla*).’

² Hawkesworth’s 4th ed., vol. iii. 1770, pp. 86, 137, 229. The skull in question is No. 5394 of the *Catalogue of the Osteology* in the above Museum, 4to, vol. ii. p. 823 (1853).

so characterised above and beyond the apes, to, at least, ordinal distinction. The dental characters of mankind bear like testimony. The lowest (Melanian), like the highest (Caucasian), variety of the Bimanal order differs from the *Quadrumanal* one in the order of appearance, and succession to the first set of teeth, of the second or 'permanent' set. The foremost incisor and foremost molar are the earliest to appear in that series; the intermediate teeth are acquired sooner than those behind the foremost molar.³

In the gorilla and chimpanzee the rate or course of progress is reversed: the second true molar, or the one behind the first, makes its appearance before the bicuspid molars rise in front of the first; and the third or last of the molars behind the first comes into place before the canine tooth has risen. This tooth, indeed, which occupies part of the interval between the foremost incisor and foremost molar, is the last of the permanent set of teeth to be fully developed in the *Quadrumana*; especially in those which, in their order, rank next to the *Bimana*. To this differential character add the breaks in the dental series necessitated for the reception of the crowns of the huge canines when the gorilla or chimpanzee shuts its mouth.

But the superior value of developmental over adult anatomical characters in such questions as the present is too well known in the actual phase of biology to need comment.

In the article on 'Primeval Man,' the author states that the Cave-men 'probably had lower foreheads, with high bosses, like the Neanderthal skull and big canine teeth like the Naulette jaw.'⁴

The human lower jaw, so defined from a Belgian cave, which I have carefully examined, gives no evidence of a canine tooth of a size indicative of one in the upper jaw, necessitating such vacancy in the lower series of teeth which the apes present. There is no such vacancy nor any evidence of a 'big canine tooth' in that cave specimen. And, with respect to cave specimens in general, the zoological characters of the race of men they represent must be founded on the rule, not on an exception, to their cranial features. Those which I obtained from the cavern at Bruniquel, and which are now exhibited in the Museum of Natural History, were disinterred under circumstances more satisfactorily determining their contemporaneity with the extinct quadrupeds those cave-men killed and devoured than in any other spelæan retreat

³ *Odontography*, 4to, 1840-44, p. 454, Plates 117, 118, 119.

⁴ *Fortnightly Review*, September, p. 321.

which I have explored. They show neither 'lower foreheads' nor 'higher bosses' than do the skulls of existing races of mankind.

Present evidence concurs in concluding that the modes of life and grades of thought of the men who have left evidences of their existence at the earliest periods, hitherto discovered and determined, were such as are now observable in 'savages,' or the human races which are commonly so called.

The industry and pains now devoted to the determination of the physical characters of such races, to their ways of living, their tools and weapons, and to the relations of their dermal, osteal, and dental modifications to those of the mammals which follow next after *Bimana* in the descensive series of mammalian orders, are exemplary.

The present phase of the quest may be far from the bourne to yield hereafter trustworthy evidence of the origin of man; but, meanwhile, exaggerations and misstatements of acquired grounds ought especially to be avoided.

R. OWEN.

A Gossip on Romance.

IN anything fit to be called by the name of reading, the process itself should be absorbing and voluptuous ; we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of images, incapable of sleep or of continuous thought. The words, if the book be eloquent, should run thenceforward in our ears like the noise of breakers, or the story, if it be a story, repeat itself in a thousand coloured pictures to the eye. It was for this last pleasure that we read so closely, and loved our books so dearly, in the bright, troubled period of boyhood. Eloquence and thought, character and conversation, were but obstacles to brush aside as we dug blithely after a certain sort of incident, like a pig for truffles. For my part, I liked a story to begin with an old wayside inn where, 'towards the close of the year 17—,' several gentlemen in three-cocked hats were playing bowls. A friend of mine preferred the Malabar coast in a storm, with a ship beating to windward, and a scowling fellow of Herculean proportions striding along the beach : he, to be sure, was a pirate. This was further afield than my home-keeping fancy loved to travel, and designed altogether for a larger canvas than the tales that I affected. Give me a highwayman and I was full to the brim ; a Jacobite would do, but the highwayman was my favourite dish. I can still hear that merry clatter of the hoofs along the moonlit lane ; night and the coming of day are still related in my mind with the doings of John Rann or Jerry Abershaw ; and the words 'postchaise,' the 'great North road,' 'ostler,' and 'nag' still sound in my ears like poetry. One and all, at least, and each with his particular fancy, we read story-books in childhood, not for eloquence or character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident. That quality was not mere bloodshed or wonder. Although each of these was welcome in its place, the charm for the sake of which we read depended on something different from either. My elders used to read novels aloud ; and I can still remember four different passages which I heard, before I was ten,

with the same keen and lasting pleasure. One I discovered long afterwards to be the admirable opening of 'What will he Do with It': it was no wonder I was pleased with that. The other three still remain unidentified. One is a little vague: it was about a dark, tall house at night, and people groping on the stairs by the light that escaped from the open door of a sick-room. In another, a lover left a ball, and went walking in a cool, dewy park, whence he could watch the lighted windows and the figures of the dancers as they moved. This was the most sentimental impression I think I had yet received, for a child is somewhat deaf to the sentimental. In the last, a poet, who had been tragically wrangling with his wife, walked forth on the sea-beach on a tempestuous night and witnessed the horrors of a wreck. Different as they are, all these early favourites have a common note—they have all a touch of the romantic.

Drama is the poetry of conduct, romance the poetry of circumstance. The pleasure that we take in life is of two sorts—the active and the passive. Now we are conscious of a great command over our destiny; anon we are lifted up by circumstance, as by a breaking wave, and dashed we know not how into the future. Now we are pleased by our conduct, anon merely pleased by our surroundings. It would be hard to say which of these modes of satisfaction is the more effective, but the latter is surely the more constant. Conduct is three parts of life, but it is not all the four. There is a vast deal in life and letters both which is not immoral, but simply a-moral; which either does not regard the human will at all, or deals with it in obvious and healthy relations; where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms, or the diplomacy of life. With such material as this it is impossible to build a play, for the serious theatre exists solely on moral grounds, and is a standing proof of the dissemination of the human conscience. But it is possible to build, upon this ground, the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales.

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a pleasant arbour puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships,

of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it. And many of the happiest hours of life fleet by us in this vain attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep soundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race; and when I was a child I tried in vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, 'miching mallecho.' The inn at Burford Bridge, with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river—though it is known already as the place where Keats finished his 'Endymion' and Nelson parted from his Emma—still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind these old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. The old Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry is another. There it stands, apart from the town, beside the pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine—in front, the ferry bubbling with the tide and the guardship swinging to her anchor; behind, the old garden with the trees. Americans seek it already for the sake of Lovel and Oldbuck, who dined there at the beginning of the 'Antiquary.' But you need not tell me—that is not all; there is some story, unrecorded or not yet complete, which must express the meaning of that inn more fully. So it is with names and faces; so it is with incidents that are idle and inconclusive in themselves, and yet seem like the beginning of some quaint romance, which the all-careless author leaves untold. How many of these romances have we not seen determine at their birth; how many people have met us with a look of meaning in their eye, and sunk at once into idle acquaintances; to how many places have we not drawn near, with express intimations—'here my destiny awaits me'—and we have but dined there and passed by! I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark.

The man or the hour had not yet come ; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.

Now, this is one of the natural appetites with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident. The dullest of clowns tells, or tries to tell, himself a story, as the feeblest of children uses invention in his play ; and even as the imaginative grown person, joining in the game, at once enriches it with many delightful circumstances, the great creative writer shows us the realisation and the apotheosis of the daydreams of common men. His stories may be nourished with the realities of life, but their true mark is to satisfy the nameless longings of the reader and to obey the ideal laws of the daydream. The right kind of thing should fall out in the right kind of place ; the right kind of thing should follow ; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music. The threads of a story come from time to time together and make a picture in the web ; the characters fall from time to time into some attitude to each other or to nature, which stamps the story home like an illustration. Crusoe recoiling from the footprint, Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, Christian running with his fingers in his ears, these are each culminating moments in the legend, and each has been printed on the mind's eye for ever. Other things we may forget ; we may forget the words, although they are beautiful ; we may forget the author's comment, although perhaps it was ingenious and true ; but these epoch-making scenes, which put the last mark of truth upon a story and fill up, at one blow, our capacity for sympathetic pleasure, we so adopt into the very bosom of our mind that neither time nor tide can efface or weaken the impression. This, then, is the plastic part of literature : to embody character, thought, or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye. This is the highest and hardest thing to do in words ; the thing which, once accomplished, equally delights the schoolboy and the sage, and makes, in its own right, the quality of epics. Compared with this, all other purposes in literature, except the purely lyrical or the purely philosophic, are bastard in nature, facile of execu-

tion, and feeble in result. It is one thing to write about the inn at Burford, or to describe scenery with the word-painters; it is quite another to seize on the heart of the suggestion and make a country famous with a legend. It is one thing to remark and to dissect, with the most cutting logic, the complications of life, and of the human spirit; it is quite another to give them body and blood in the story of Ajax or of Hamlet. The first is literature, but the second is something besides, for it is likewise art.

English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of tea-spoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all, or at least with a very dull one. Reduced even to the lowest terms, a certain interest can be communicated by the art of narrative; a sense of human kinship stirred; and a kind of monotonous fitness, comparable to the words and air of 'Sandy's Mull,' preserved among the infinitesimal occurrences recorded. Some people work, in this manner, with even a strong touch. Mr. Trollope's inimitable clergymen naturally arise to the mind in this connection. But even Mr. Trollope does not confine himself to chronicling small beer. Mr. Crawley's collision with the Bishop's wife, Mr. Melnotte dallying in the deserted banquet-room, are typical incidents, epically conceived, fitly embodying a crisis. If Rawdon Crawley's blow were not delivered, 'Vanity Fair' would cease to be a work of art. That scene is the chief ganglion of the tale; and the discharge of energy from Rawdon's fist is the reward and consolation of the reader. The end of 'Esmond' is a yet wider excursion from the author's customary fields; the scene at Castlewood is pure Dumas; the great and wily English borrower has here borrowed from the great, unblushing French thief; as usual, he has borrowed admirably well, and the breaking of the sword rounds off the best of all his books with a manly, martial note. But perhaps nothing can more strongly illustrate the necessity for marking incident than to compare the living fame of 'Robinson Crusoe' with the discredit of 'Clarissa Harlowe.' 'Clarissa' is a book of a far more startling import, worked out, on a great canvas, with inimitable courage and unflagging art; it contains wit, character, passion, plot, conversations full of spirit and insight, letters sparkling with unstrained humanity; and if the death of the heroine be somewhat frigid and artificial, the last days of the hero strike the only note of what we now call Byronism, between the Elizabethans and Byron himself. And yet a little story of a

shipwrecked sailor, with not a tenth part of the style nor a thousandth part of the wisdom, exploring none of the arcana of humanity and deprived of the perennial interest of love, goes on from edition to edition, ever young, while 'Clarissa' lies upon the shelves unread. A friend of mine, a Welsh blacksmith, was twenty-five years old, and could neither read nor write, when he heard a chapter of 'Robinson' read aloud in a farm kitchen. Up to that moment he had sat content, huddled in his ignorance; but he left that farm another man. There were daydreams, it appeared, divine daydreams, written and printed and bound, and to be bought for money and enjoyed at pleasure. Down he sat that day, painfully learned to read Welsh, and returned to borrow the book. It had been lost, nor could he find another copy but one that was in English. Down he sat once more, learned English, and at length, and with entire delight, read 'Robinson.' It is like the story of a love-chase. If he had heard a letter from 'Clarissa,' would he have been fired with the same chivalrous ardour? I wonder. Yet 'Clarissa' has every quality that can be shown in prose, one alone excepted: pictorial, or picture-making romance. While 'Robinson' depends, for the most part and with the overwhelming majority of its readers, on the charm of circumstance.

In the highest achievements of the art of words, the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and romantic interest rise and fall together by a common and organic law. Situation is animated with passion, passion clothed upon with situation. Neither exists for itself, but each inheres indissolubly with the other. This is high art; and not only the highest art possible in words, but the highest art of all, since it combines the greatest mass and diversity of the elements of truth and pleasure. Such are epics, and the few prose tales that have the epic weight. But as from a school of works, aping the creative, incident and romance are ruthlessly discarded, so may character and drama be omitted or subordinated to romance. There is one book, for example, more generally loved than Shakespeare, that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age—I mean the 'Arabian Nights'—where you shall look in vain for moral or for intellectual interest. No human face or voice greets us among that wooden crowd of kings and genies, sorcerers and beggarmen. Adventure, on the most naked terms furnishes forth the entertainment and is found enough. Dumas approaches perhaps nearest of any modern to these Arabian authors in the purely material charm of his romances. The early part of 'Monte

Christo,' down to the finding of the treasure, is a piece of perfect story-telling; the man never breathed who shared these moving incidents without a tremor; and yet Faria is a thing of packthread and Dantès little more than a name. The sequel is one long-drawn error, gloomy, bloody, unnatural and dull; but as for these early chapters, I do not believe there is another volume extant where you can breathe the same unmingled atmosphere of romance. It is very thin and light, to be sure, as on a high mountain; but it is brisk and clear and sunny in proportion. I saw the other day, with envy, an old and a very clever lady setting forth on a second or third voyage into 'Monte Christo.' Here are stories, which powerfully affect the reader, which can be reperused at any age, and where the characters are no more than puppets. The bony fist of the showman visibly propels them; their springs are an open secret; their faces are of wood, their bellies filled with bran; and yet we thrillingly partake of their adventures. And the point may be illustrated still further. The last interview between Lucy and Richard Feverell is pure drama; more than that, it is the strongest scene, since Shakespeare, in the English tongue. Their first meeting by the river, on the other hand, is pure romance; it has nothing to do with character; it might happen to any other boy and maiden, and be none the less delightful for the change. And yet I think he would be a bold man who should choose between these passages. Thus, in the same book, we may have two scenes, each capital in its order: in the one, human passion, deep calling unto deep, shall utter its genuine voice; in the second, according circumstances, like instruments in tune, shall build up a trivial but desirable incident, such as we love to prefigure for ourselves; and in the end, in spite of the critics, we may hesitate to give the preference to either. The one may ask more genius—I do not say it does; but at least the other dwells as clearly in the memory.

True romantic art, again, makes a romance of all things. It reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal; it does not refuse the most pedestrian realism. 'Robinson Crusoe' is as realistic as it is romantic; both qualities are pushed to an extreme, and neither suffers. Nor does romance depend upon the material importance of the incidents. To deal with strong and deadly elements, banditti, pirates, war, and murder, is to conjure with great names, and, in the event of failure, to double the disgrace. The arrival of Haydn and Consuelo at the Canon's villa is a very trifling incident; yet we may read a dozen boisterous stories from beginning to end, and not receive so fresh and stirring an impression of adventure. It

was the scene of Crusoe at the wreck, if I remember rightly, that so bewitched my blacksmith. Nor is the fact surprising. Every single article the castaway recovers from the hulk is 'a joy for ever' to the man who reads of them. They are the things he ought to find, and the bare enumeration stirs the blood. I found a glimmer of the same interest the other day in a new book, 'The Sailor's Sweetheart,' by Mr. Clark Russell. The whole business of the brig 'Morning Star' is very rightly felt and spiritedly written; but the clothes, the books, and the money satisfy the reader's mind like things to eat. We are dealing here with the old cut-and-dry, legitimate interest of treasure trove. But even treasure trove can be made dull. There are few people who have not groaned under the plethora of goods that fell to the lot of the 'Swiss Family Robinson,' that dreary family. They found article after article, creature after creature, from milk kine to pieces of ordnance, a whole consignment; but no informing taste had presided over the selection, there was no smack or relish in the invoice; and all these riches left the fancy cold. The box of goods in Verne's 'Mysterious Island' is another case in point: there was no gusto and no glamour about that; it might have come from a shop. But the two hundred and seventy-eight Australian sovereigns on board the 'Morning Star' fell upon me like a surprise that I had expected; whole vistas of secondary stories, besides the one in hand, radiated forth from that discovery, as they radiate from a striking particular in life; and I was made for the moment as happy as a reader has the right to be.

To come at all at the nature of this quality of romance, we must bear in mind the peculiarity of our attitude to any art. No art produces illusion; in the theatre, we never forget that we are in the theatre; and while we read a story, we sit wavering between two minds, now merely clapping our hands at the merit of the performance, now condescending to take an active part in fancy with the characters. This last is the triumph of story-telling: when the reader consciously plays at being the hero, the scene is a good scene. Now in character-studies the pleasure that we take is critical; we watch, we approve, we smile at incongruities, we are moved to sudden heats of sympathy with courage, suffering, or virtue. But the characters are still themselves; they are not us; the more clearly they are depicted, the more widely do they stand away from us, the more imperiously do they thrust us back into our place as a spectator. I cannot identify myself with Rawdon Crawley or with Eugene de Rastignac, for I have scarce a

hope or fear in common with them. It is not character, but incident, that woos us out of our reserve. Something happens, as we desire to have it happen to ourselves; some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realised in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance. It is not only pleasurable things that we imagine in our daydreams; there are lights in which we are willing to contemplate even the idea of our own death; ways in which it seems as if it would amuse us to be cheated, wounded, or calumniated. It is thus possible to construct a story, even of tragic import, in which every incident, detail, and trick of circumstance shall be welcome to the reader's thoughts. Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child. It is there that he changes the atmosphere and tenor of his life. And when the game so chimes with his fancy that he can join in it with all his heart, when it pleases him with every turn, when he loves to recall it and dwells upon its recollection with entire delight, fiction is called romance.

Walter Scott is out and away the king of the romantics. 'The Lady of the Lake' has no indisputable claim to be a poem beyond the inherent fitness and desirability of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in. Hence it is that a charm dwells undefinable among these slovenly verses, as the unseen cuckoo fills the mountains with his note; hence, even after we have flung the book aside, the scenery and adventures remain present to the mind, a new and green possession, not unworthy of that beautiful name, 'The Lady of the Lake,' or that direct, romantic opening—one of the most spirited and poetical in literature—'The stag at eve had drunk his fill.' The same strength and the same weaknesses adorn and disfigure the novels. In that ill-written, ragged book, 'The Pirate,' the figure of Cleveland—cast up by the sea on the resounding foreland of Dunrossness—moving, with the blood on his hands and the Spanish words on his tongue, among the simple islanders—singing a serenade under the window of his Shetland mistress—is conceived in the very highest manner of romantic invention. The words of his song, 'Through groves of palm,' sung in such a scene and by such a lover, clench, as in a nutshell, the emphatic contrast upon which the tale is built. In 'Guy Mannering,' again, every inci-

dent is delightful to the imagination; and the scene when Harry Bertram lands at Ellangowan is a model instance of romantic method.

“‘I remember the tune well,’” he says, “‘though I cannot guess what should at present so strongly recall it to my memory.’” He took his flageolet from his pocket and played a simple melody. Apparently the tune awoke the corresponding associations of a damsel. . . . She immediately took up the song:—

Are these the links of Forth, she said;
Or are they the crooks of Dee,
Or the bonny woods of Warroch Head
That I so fain would see?

“‘By heaven!’” said Bertram, “‘it is the very ballad.’”

On this quotation two remarks fall to be made. First, as an instance of modern feeling for romance, this famous touch of the flageolet and the old song is selected by Miss Braddon for omission. Miss Braddon’s idea of a story, like Mrs. Todgers’s idea of a wooden leg, were something strange to have expounded. As a matter of personal experience, Meg’s appearance to old Mr. Bertram on the road, the ruins of Dorniecleugh, the scene of the flageolet, and the Dominie’s recognition of Harry, are the four strong notes that continue to ring in the mind after the book is laid aside. The second point is still more curious. The reader will observe a mark of excision in the passage as quoted by me. Well, here is how it runs in the original: ‘A damsel, who, close behind a fine spring about half-way down the descent, and which had once supplied the castle with water, was engaged in bleaching linen.’ A man who gave in such copy would be discharged from the staff of a daily paper. Scott has forgotten to prepare the reader for the presence of the ‘damsel’; he has forgotten to mention the spring and its relation to the ruin; and now, face to face with his omission, instead of trying back and starting fair, crams all this matter, tail foremost, into a single shambling sentence. It is not merely bad English, or bad style; it is abominably bad narrative besides.

Certainly the contrast is remarkable; and it is one that throws a strong light upon the subject of this paper. For here we have a man, of the finest creative instinct, touching with perfect certainty and charm the romantic junctures of his story; and we find him utterly careless, almost, it would seem, incapable, in the technical matter of style; and not only frequently weak, but fre-

quently wrong, in points of drama. In character parts, indeed, and particularly in the Scotch, he was delicate, strong, and truthful; but the trite, obliterated features of too many of his heroes have already wearied two generations of readers. At times, his characters will speak with something far beyond propriety, with a true heroic note; but on the next page they will be wading wearily forward with an ungrammatical and undramatic rigmarole of words. The man who could conceive and write the character of Elspeth of the Craighburnfoot, as Scott has conceived and written it, had not only splendid romantic, but splendid tragic, gifts. How comes it, then, that he could so often fob us off with languid, inarticulate twaddle?

It seems to me that the explanation is to be found in the very quality of his surprising merits. As his books are play to the reader, so were they play to him. He conjured up the beautiful with delight, but he had hardly patience to describe it. He was a great daydreamer, a seeër of fit and beautiful and humorous visions; but hardly a great artist; hardly, in the manful sense, an artist at all. He pleased himself, and so he pleases us. Of the pleasures of his art he tasted fully; but of its toils and vigils and distresses never man knew less. A great romantic—an idle child.

R. L. STEVENSON.

Some Points in American Speech and Customs.

I.

THAT the two great branches of the English people on the two sides of the Ocean should never weary of hearing about one another is surely only natural and creditable to both. I trust at least that those whose business it is to hear do not weary of hearing; for certainly those on either side who expect others to listen to them seem never weary of telling their experience of the other side. He who visits Britain from America, he who visits America from Britain, seems bound, if he be at all in the habit of using the pen, to use it forthwith to set down all or some of his impressions of the kindred land and its people. The thing seems to have taken its place as a formal duty which cannot be escaped. For my own part, I had hoped to escape it. I was so well treated in America that it really seemed unthankful, almost uncivil, for me to write anything about America. Yet, while I was there, I was asked over and over again whether I meant to write a book about America. All thought of writing a book I could honestly disclaim; and it was only gradually that the necessity of writing something less than a book forced itself upon me. It somehow became unavoidable to say something, and my graver thoughts, whatever they may be worth, on several important matters dealing with the condition and prospects of the United States I have tried to set forth in a graver quarter. But, having once begun, I still find something to say, and, being asked to write something for an early number of *LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE*, it came almost natural to me to think of talking about some other things which had struck me in my American visit, things bearing on matters of less dignity than the constitution of the Union and the historical relation of that constitution to those of England and other European lands.

I have elsewhere ventured on the saying, which to some may very likely seem a paradox, that I found less difference between

England and the United States than I find between England and Scotland.] Perhaps I am not altogether qualified to judge, as I have certainly seen more of the United States than I have seen of Scotland. But so it certainly struck me; and I thought I saw one chief reason for the fact, namely, that English and American law are for the most part the same, while English and Scottish law are for the most part different. I believe that this difference of law affects many more things, much more of daily habit, many more of the common forms of speech, than would at first be thought. But, on this showing, I may possibly be asked whether I do not find a greater likeness between Ireland and either England or America than I find between either of these lands and Scotland. In going to Ireland, as in going to America, we cross the sea—certainly a much smaller part of it—and we then find ourselves in a land essentially of our own law, while in going to Scotland we keep within our own island, and yet find ourselves in a land essentially of another law. And it may happen that more superficial likenesses between America and Ireland may strike the British visitor to America pretty soon after his landing. It was an American visitor to England who remarked—I believe he did not complain—that in England he missed the sound of the Irish accent. And he who lands in America, above all if he lands, as most of us do, at New York—yet more, if he makes, as many of us do, his first acquaintance with dollars by spending a large number of them on a New York hackney carriage—will certainly remark, whether he welcomes or not, the sound of the Irish accent at the very beginning of his sojourn. But he may perhaps before long come to think that the presence of English law in Ireland and the presence of the Irish cabdriver in America are alike phenomena which are a little abnormal, though they may perhaps have a subtle connexion with one another. It may be that, if English rule, and along with it English law, had never found their way into Ireland, the Irish cabdriver would never have found his way to New York. And some may even go on to think that, if the history of mankind had taken that turn, three countries at least would be the happier for it. Anyhow the likeness of the law between England and Ireland does not bring with it the same kind of likeness between England and Ireland which the likeness of the law between England and America brings with it. And the reason is plain. In Ireland English law, and all that comes of the presence of English law, is something thoroughly foreign. In America the presence of English law, and all that comes of the

presence of English law, is something thoroughly natural and native. The law of Ireland is like the law of England, because Englishmen conquered Ireland and forced their own law upon the people of Ireland. The law of America is like the law of England, because Englishmen, freely settling in the new land of America, naturally took their own law with them. But Scotland was never either conquered in the same sense as Ireland nor settled in the same sense as America; Scotland therefore has never accepted English law, but keeps a wholly distinct law of her own growth.

Whatever therefore of likeness the English traveller in Ireland finds between that island and his own country is due to causes exactly opposite to those which bring about the likeness between England and America. In both cases the likeness is due to the presence of Englishmen in lands beyond the bounds of England; but it is due to their presence in altogether different characters. In the one case it is the presence of conquerors in an inhabited land; in the other it is the presence of settlers in what was practically an uninhabited land. Whatever likeness there is between England and Ireland, between America and Ireland, is only on the surface. Whatever likeness there is between England and Scotland, between England and America, between Scotland and America, all belongs to the very root of the matter. The likenesses and unlikenesses are of course in all cases due to historical causes. But in the one case they are due to comparatively modern historical events, after the nations severally concerned had put on their several national characters. In the other case they are due to those subtler causes, those earlier events, which ruled that the nations concerned should severally be what they are.

I said that the difference between England and Scotland seemed to me greater than the difference between England and America. I may add that the difference in each case is, to a great extent, a difference of the same kind. And here I must venture on a paradox. The difference between Scotland and England and the difference between America and England are both, I hold, largely owing to the fact that both Scotland and America are in many things more English than England itself. This is above all things true in the matter of language. People talk of 'Americanisms' and of 'Scotticisms,' as if they were in all cases corruptions, or at all events changes, introduced by Americans and Scotsmen severally into the existing English tongue. Now I do not deny that there are a good many 'Americanisms' and a few 'Scotticisms' which really answer that definition. But I

maintain that the great mass of both classes come under quite another head. What people commonly call an 'Americanism' or a 'Scotticism,' is, for the more part, some perfectly good English word or phrase, which has gone out of use in England, but which has lived on in America or in Scotland. To take two very obvious instances, most people, I feel sure, would call *bairn* a Scotch word; most people, I feel sure, would call *fall*, in the sense of *autumn*, not indeed an American word, but an American use of the word. It almost seems as if they believed that the use of the word *bairn* in any sense, and the use of the word *fall* in that particular sense, was something that the Scots and the Americans severally had devised of their own hearts, and in which England never had any share at any time. Yet nothing is more certain than that *bairn* is Scotch only so far as it has gone out of use in England and has lived on in Scotland. West-Saxon Alfred talks about his 'bairns,' while the word would certainly not have been understood by any true Scottish Kenneth or Malcolm. *Fall*, in the particular sense of autumn, is, in the like sort, American only so far as it has lived on in America while it has gone out of use in England. That is, if it has gone out of use in England; for I can distinctly remember the phrase 'spring and fall' in my childhood. By 'Scotch' in common talk is never meant the Gaelic speech of the true Scots; the word always means the speech of that part of Northern England which came under the rule of the kings of the true Scots. The English of that district was naturally less affected than Southern English by the Norman and French influences of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. It therefore keeps a crowd of good and strong English words which have dropped out of use in Southern English. On the other hand, the later connexion between France and Scotland, and the respect shown in Scotland to the Roman law, have brought in a good many French and Latin words which are unknown in Southern English. The word 'American,' as applied to language, means, in the mouth of a comparative philologist, the native languages of the American continent, exactly as 'Scottish' ought to mean the language of the original Scots. In common use it does mean the English language, as spoken and written in the United States. I say the United States, because I am not quite clear whether Canada would come in or not. Now in the matter of language, as in most other matters, the United States have followed the usual law of colonies. A colony is always exposed to two opposite tendencies, which, though opposite, are found not uncommonly

to work busily side by side. There is a greater tendency to stand still, and there is also a greater tendency to go ahead, than there is in the mother country. A colony which has no chance of going ahead is likely to stand very still indeed, much stiller than an old country. A small isolated colony, say a small island, is likely to become one of the most old-world places to be found. It will in many things keep on the state of things which existed in the mother country at the time of the settlement, long after that state of things has, in the mother country itself, become a thing of the past. It has become a proverb that, if you wish to see old France, you must go to French Canada. And for many things, if you wish to see old England, you must go to New England. In the United States the tendency to go ahead has certainly reached as great a developement as in any part of the world; but it has by no means driven out the opposite tendency to stand still. I need not say that I noticed many things in which our kinsfolk beyond the Ocean had—sometimes, I thought, for good, sometimes, I thought, for evil—left us behind. But I also noticed some things in which they had—sometimes, I thought, for good, sometimes for evil—lagged behind us. There is a vast deal of conservative feeling, or at least of conservative habit, at work in the United States, at any rate in the older States. There is much about them in speech, in manners, in institutions, which has a thoroughly old-world character, much that has lived on from the England of the seventeenth century, much in which the circumstances of the settlers called back into being things far older than the England of the seventeenth century. When anything that seems strange to a British visitor in American speech or American manners is not quite modern on the face of it, it is pretty certain to be something which was once common to the older and the newer England, but which the newer England has kept, while the older England has cast it aside. And it is not very hard to distinguish between usages which have this venerable sanction and usages which have come in only yesterday. It does not need any very great effort to discern between words, phrases, ways of looking at things, which have been handed on from the days of John Smith of Virginia or Roger Williams of Rhode Island, and words, phrases, ways of looking at things, which have come in under the reign of the stump orator, the interviewer, and that deadliest of all foes to the English tongue and to every other tongue, the schoolmaster.

I have drawn a parallel between the Scottish and the American forms of English; but it is a parallel which is far

from holding good in every point. The Scottish—that is, the Northern—form of English is, in the strictest sense, a dialect. That is to say, it is an independent form of the language, which might have come to set the standard of the language and to become the polite and literary speech, instead of that form of the language to which that calling actually fell. Or rather, as long as Scotland was politically distinct from the Southern England, the Northern form of English actually did set the standard within its own range. It was the polite and literary speech within the English-speaking lands of the Scottish kings. It is only the political union of the kingdoms which has brought Northern English down from that place of dignity, and has caused Southern English to set the standard of speech through the whole of Great Britain. Whatever a Scotsman may speak, he now writes after the manner of a Southern Englishman. But the Englishman of America does not write—he is in no way called on to write—after the manner of the Englishman of Britain, but after his own manner. For his manner of speech, however it may differ from the speech of the Englishman of Britain, does not differ as a dialect strictly so called. And this is none the less true, though it is quite certain that several dialects of English are spoken in America. Some Americans, specially curious in such matters, profess to mark some difference of speech in almost every State, and to be able in most cases to say from what State a man comes. To this amount of discernment I naturally can make no claim; but I can see some marked points of difference between the speech of the Northern and Southern States, taken as wholes. And I can further see that the speech of Virginia agrees in some points with the speech of Wessex, points in which it differs from the speech of either Boston. Thus, for instance, the surname *Carter*, which to us does not sound specially patrician, but which in Virginia is reckoned to be at least as noble as Berkeley, if not as Montmorency, is locally sounded *Kyartah*. Now if the utterance of the latter half of the word may seem to be that of a London lounger, the utterance of the former part is genuine West-Saxon, whether of the days of Alfred or the days of Victoria. But if we come to compare the English of the United States, as a whole, with the English of Britain as a whole, there is no difference of dialect strictly so called between them. There is not the same kind of difference which there is between the English of the Northern and Southern parts of Britain itself. The test seems to lie in the fact which I have just spoken of. The speaker of Northern English finds it needful to adopt, for certain purposes, the Southern form of

English, instead of that which is natural to him. But no American speaker or writer ever thinks it needful to adopt a British form of his own language, any more than a British speaker or writer thinks it needful to adopt an American form.

And yet it is perfectly plain that the English tongue common to Britain and America is not spoken and written in exactly the same way in Britain and in America. The man of either land carries with him marks characteristic of his own land which will not fail to bewray him to men of the other land. But those marks are not of the nature of dialectic difference strictly so called. I told my American hearers, in some of the lectures which I gave in several places, that between them and us I could see no difference of language, no difference of dialect, but that there was a considerable difference of local usage. Now local usage in matter of speech, whether it be of old standing or of quite modern origin, is altogether another thing from real difference of dialect. Real difference of dialect is a matter which lies pretty much beyond the control of the human will. It is often unconscious, it is almost always involuntary; if any reason can be given for the difference, it is a reason which does not lie on the surface, but which needs to be found out by philological research. But mere local usage, though it may have become quite immemorial, is not thus wholly beyond our own control. There is something conscious about it, something at any rate which can be changed by an immediate act of the will. For mere difference of local usage in language, we can often give some very obvious reason, which needs no philological research at all to find it out. For instance, what we may call the language of railways is largely different in England and in America. But this is no difference of dialect, only difference of local usage. In each case a particular word has been chosen rather than another. In each case the word which has been chosen sounds odd to those who are used to the other. In each case we can sometimes see the reason for the difference of usage, and sometimes not. No obvious reason can be given why in England we speak of the 'railway,' while in America they commonly speak of the 'railroad.' But no one on either side can have the least difficulty in understanding the word which is used on the other side. And indeed the American might say that, in this as in some greater and older matters, he has stuck to the older usage. Though 'railroad' is now seldom used in England, my own memory tells me that it was the more usual name when the thing itself first came in. 'Railway,' for what reason I know not, has displaced 'railroad' in England,

and it is worth remarking that it is doing the same in some parts of America. Here one can see no reason for one usage rather than the other, and no advantage in one usage rather than the other. But when the American goes on to speak, as he often does, of the railroad simply as 'the road,' his language may sometimes be a little misleading, but it is easy to see the reason for it. In England we had everywhere roads before we had railroads; the railroad needed a qualifying syllable to distinguish it from the older and better known kind of road. But in a large part of America the railroad is actually the oldest road; there is therefore no such need to distinguish it from any other. This to us seems rather like a state of things in which printing should be familiar, but writing unknown; but it is a state of things which the circumstances of our time have brought about in a large part of the United States. That is to say, the two tendencies of which I spoke have been at work side by side. The tendency to lag behind has hindered the growth of a good system of roads; the tendency to go ahead has brought in a gigantic system of railroads. Here we see the reason for the different use of language. We see it also in the different names for the thing which, when the railroad is made, runs along its rails. In Britain it is a 'carriage'; in America it is a 'car.' This at least is by no means a distinction without a reason. The different forms of English railway-carriage might afford some curious matters for observation to a philosopher of the school of Mr. Tylor. Nowhere can the doctrine of survivals be better studied. The original railway-carriage was the old-fashioned carriage put to a new use; the innovation lay in putting several such carriages together. It is only quite gradually that what we may call a picture of the old carriage has disappeared from our trains. This is as distinct a survival as the useless buttons on a modern coat which once fastened up a lappet, helped to carry a sword, or discharged some other useful function now forgotten. But the American 'car' was not made after any such pattern. It is strictly a 'car'; at any rate it is quite unlike the special meaning attached to the word 'carriage.' If anything other than itself was present to the mind of the deviser of the American car, it was rather the cabin of a steamer than any earlier kind of carriage; and such an origin is suggested by the American phrase of being 'on board' a train, which I fancy is never heard in England. Among European things, the older kind of American car is most like that which is used on the Swiss railways, as if there were some kind of federal symbolism in both. And now another form

of the American car is making its way into England, and with the thing the name comes too. For 'car' then there is a good reason; but it is hard to see why a railway-station should be called a 'depôt.' The word 'station' is not etymologically English; it is therefore not so good a name as the German *bahnhof*; but it is quite naturalized and familiar, while 'depôt' is still foreign, and hardly becomes less so by being sounded as if it were Italian and written *dipo*. But on several American railroads the name is beginning to give way to the more reasonable word 'station.'

All these instances taken from railway matters are necessarily very modern; I will take another which I have no doubt is as old as English settlement in America. In England we use the word 'shop' both for a place where things are made or done and for a place where things are sold. In America the word is confined to the place where things are made or done, as 'barber-shop,' 'carpenter-shop'; a place where things are sold is a 'store.' Less old most likely, but certainly not of yesterday, is the usage which confines the name 'corn' to one particular kind of corn, that namely which we know as 'Indian corn' or maize. I heard a most distinguished Englishman—Britisher, at all events—lecture to an American audience on the history of the English corn-laws; and I doubted in my own mind whether all his hearers would understand that he was mainly speaking of wheat. Now neither of these forms of speech comes among the cases in which the colony has kept on the elder usage of the mother country. This hardly needs proof in the case of 'corn.' But the narrower use of that word is exactly analogous to the narrower use of the word 'beast' among English graziers, and of the word 'bird' among English sportsmen. In the case of 'shop,' the word is perfectly good English both in the wider and in the narrower sense, as it is in a good many other senses besides. But I cannot find that 'store' was ever used in England in the American sense, till it came in quite lately in the case of 'co-operative stores.' But I have not the slightest doubt that a perfectly good reason for the difference of usage could be found in some circumstance of early colonial life. I can fancy that in one of the first New England settlements a shop would really be a 'store,' in a sense in which it hardly is now on either side of Ocean. And the 'co-operative store' may be so called for some reason of the same kind, or it may be because the name is thought to be finer, or it may be a mere transplantation of the American name. The 'shop' or the 'store' suggests its contents; and I dare say that

there is some good reason, though I do not see it, why the contents of one particular kind of 'store' should be specially called 'dry goods.' The contents of some other kinds of store seem to the untechnical mind to be equally dry. But the phrase, however it arose, is just like our phrase 'hardware,' which does not take in all things that are in themselves hard. Then again, I have known some foolish Britishers mock at such phrases as 'town lot,' 'city lot'; but these are perfectly good and natural names for things to which we have nothing exactly answering in modern England. The constant use of the phrase 'block,' in showing a man his way about a town, struck me at first as odd. But it is a perfectly good use. American towns are built in blocks, in a way in which the elder English towns at least are not. The 'city lot' suggests the 'city' itself, of which we certainly hear much more in America than in England. The use of the word 'city' in England is rather strange. At some time later than Domesday and earlier than Henry the Eighth, it came to be confined on one hand and extended on the other, so as to take in all places that were bishops' sees, and no places that were not. In America a 'city' means what we should call a corporate town or municipal borough. But in England the word 'city' is seldom used, except either in rather formal speech or else to distinguish the real city of London from the other parts of the 'province covered with houses' which in common speech bears its name. In America the word 'city' is in constant use, where we should use the word 'town,' even though the place spoken of bears the formal rank of a city. I remember getting into strange cross-purposes with an American gentleman who, in speaking of a visit to London, went on speaking of 'the city,' while he meant parts of the province covered with houses far away from what I understood by that name. 'Town,' in New England at least, has another meaning. A 'town' or 'township' may contain a 'city,' or it may not. On the other hand, one often hears the phrase 'down town,' even in New York itself. New York, by the way, calls itself a 'metropolis'; in what sense of the word it is not easy to guess, as it can hardly be because it is the seat of a Roman Catholic archbishopric. And I have even known a New York paper speak of the rest of the United States as 'the provinces.' That insulting name is bad enough when it is applied to an English shire; it is surely worse still when it is applied to a sovereign commonwealth.

The words 'metropolis' and 'provinces,' used in this way, I venture to call slang, whether the city which is set up above

its fellows is London or New York. Anyhow this use of them is in no way distinctively American; indeed the misuse of the word 'provinces' is, I fancy, excessively rare in America, and it is certainly borrowed from England. Each side of the Ocean unluckily finds it easier to copy the abuses of the other side than to stick to the noble heritage which is common to both. But even in the abuses of language on either side there is no strictly dialectic difference; still less is there any such difference in those legitimate varieties of local usage which have grown up out of the different circumstances of the two countries. But many of these last have thus much in common with dialectic differences, that they have come of themselves without any fixed purpose, even though we often can, as we cannot in the case of strictly dialectic difference, see why they have come. It is otherwise when one word is used rather than another under the notion of its being finer. This is plainly the case with 'depôt,' and I suppose it is also with 'conductor' for 'guard.' But one cannot see either that 'railroad' is finer than 'railway,' or that 'railway' is finer than 'railroad.' If 'store' may, from one point of view, be thought finer than 'shop,' the increased fineness is quite accidental; it is another thing when any man on either side calls his shop or store his 'establishment.' In nearly all these cases the difference matters nothing to one whose object is to save some relics of the good old English tongue. One way is for the most part as good as the other; let each side of the Ocean stick to its own way, if only to keep up those little picturesque differences which are really a gain when the substance is essentially the same. This same line of thought might be carried out in a crowd of phrases, old and new, in which British and American usage differs, but in which neither usage can be said to be in itself better or worse than the other. Each usage is the better in the land in which it has grown up of itself. A good British writer and a good American writer will write in the same language and the same dialect; but it is well that each should keep to those little peculiarities of established and reasonable local usage which will show on which side of the Ocean he writes. It is not so with slang, on whichever side it has grown up. It is hard to define slang; but we commonly know it when we hear it. Slang, I should think, was always conscious in its origin. A word or phrase is used, not unconsciously under the natural compulsion of some good reason for its use, but consciously, indeed of set purpose, because it is thought to sound fine or clever. It presently

comes to be used by crowds of people as a matter of course, without any such thought; but its origin sticks to it; it remains slang, and never becomes the true yoke-fellow of words and phrases which have grown up of themselves as they were really needed. Or again, there may be a word or phrase which is good enough in its turn with others, but which, if used constantly to the exclusion of others, seems to partake of the nature of slang. Some favourite American forms of speech seem to us in this way to savour of slang, and I believe that some favourite British forms of speech in the like sort savour of slang to an American. To take a very small example, perhaps the better because it is so very small, the word 'certainly' is a very natural form of granting any request; but in England we should hardly use it except in granting a request of some little importance, or one about the granting of which there might be some little doubt; American use extends it to the very smallest civilities of the table. 'I guess' I have always stood up for, as a perfectly good form, if only it is not always used to the exclusion of other forms. 'I reckon' is as good English as English can be; it is only at 'I calculate' that one would begin to kick; but I do not think that 'I calculate' is often heard in the kind of American society to which I was used. It might however be taken as an instance of the way in which technical and special words get into common use, sometimes on one side of the Ocean, sometimes on the other, and which seem odd to those who are not used to them. Let me take an Oxford story of perhaps five-and-thirty years ago. A story was told in a common-room of an American clergyman who was in the habit of getting into theological discussions with his bishop, and who was sometimes a little puzzled as to the way in which he ought to behave in such cases towards his spiritual superior. 'I had a respect for his office,' said the presbyter; 'but I did not like to *endorse* all that he said.' A fit of laughter went round the room. Thirty-five years ago there seemed something irresistibly ludicrous in applying a commercial word like 'endorse' to agreement or disagreement on a theological matter. I am quite sure that no one would laugh at it now either in America or in Britain; we all endorse, or decline to endorse, positions on all questions, theological, political, philosophical, or any other. But I doubt whether anyone in England would talk of 'the balance of the day,' a phrase which I have heard in America, though I should doubt its being common. Purely legal phrases too seem to get more easily into common use in America than here, and I am told

that the same is the case with medical phrases also. I was a good deal amazed at first to see 'Real Estate,' 'Real Estate Office,' written up as the mark of a place of business. I knew my Blackstone well enough to have no difficulty as to what was meant; but it looked to me very much as if anybody had advertised a 'Jetsam and Flotsam office.' But I presently found that 'real estate,' 'to buy real estate,' were phrases in daily use both in the newspapers and in common talk. Now certainly no one in England would, if a man had bought houses or lands, say that he had bought 'real estate.' He would, if he did not define the particular thing bought, be more likely to veil it under the general name of 'property.'

In pronunciation strictly so called, I mean the utterance of particular words as distinguished from any general tone, accent, intonation, and the like, I remarked less difference between America and England than there is in the use of the words themselves. Of certain dialectic differences within the United States themselves I have already said something. When the Virginian says 'doe' and 'floe' for 'door' and 'floor,' it is as truly a case of dialect in the strictest sense as the difference between the dialect of Somerset and the dialect of Yorkshire. But I noticed some prevalent differences of pronunciation in America which were in no sense dialectical, but which were clearly adopted on a principle. I fancy that something that may be called a principle has more influence on pronunciation in America than it has in England. This remark is not my own; I found it, or something to the same effect, in an American periodical. It was there remarked that in America there is a large class of people who read a great deal without very much education, and who are apt to draw their ideas of pronunciation rather from the look of the words in the book than from any traditional way of uttering them. This will most likely account for some cases, specially for one on which I shall have something to say presently. But there are other cases in which the American usage, though it sounds odd to a British ear, is strictly according to the analogy of the English tongue. I heard in America 'ôpponent' and 'îquiry,' and very odd they sounded. But they simply follow the English rule of throwing the accent as far back as we can, without regard to the Latin or Greek quantity. If we say 'théâtre'—which, by the way, is accidentally right, according to the Greek *accent*—'aúditor,' 'áblative,' and a crowd of other words of the same kind, we may as well say 'ôpponent' and

‘inquiry.’ The only reason against so doing is, I suppose, that they are a little hard to say, which is doubtless the reason why, while everybody says ‘aúditor’ and ‘sénator,’ nobody says ‘spéctator.’ But there is one word on which I wish to speak a little more at large, as a clear instance in which the schoolmaster or the printed text or some other artificial influence has brought about a distinct change in pronunciation. The word ‘clerk’ is in England usually sounded ‘clark,’ while in America it is usually sounded ‘clurk.’ I say ‘usually,’ because I did once hear ‘clurk’ in England—from a London shopman—and because I was told at Philadelphia that some old people there still said ‘clark,’ and—a most important fact—that those who said ‘clark’ also said ‘marchant.’ Now it is quite certain that ‘clark’ is the older pronunciation, the pronunciation which the first settlers must have taken with them. This is proved by the fact that the word as a surname—and it is one of the commonest of surnames—is always sounded, and most commonly written, ‘Clark’ or ‘Clarke.’ I suspect that ‘Clerk’ as a surname, so spelled, is distinctively ‘Scotch,’ in the modern sense of that word. Also in writers of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the word itself is very often written ‘clark’ or ‘clarke.’ But of course ‘clerk’ was at all times the more clerkly spelling, as showing the French and Latin origin of the word. It is plain therefore that the pronunciation ‘clurk’ is not traditional, but has been brought in artificially, out of a notion of making the sound conform to the spelling. But ‘clurk’ is no more the true sound than ‘clark’; the true sound is ‘clairk,’ like French ‘clerc,’ and a Scotsman would surely sound it so. ‘Clark’ and ‘clurk’ are both mere approximations to the French sound, and ‘clark’ is the older, and surely the more natural approximation. The truth is that we cannot sound ‘clerk’ as it is spelled; that is, we cannot give the *e* before *r* the same sound which we give it when it is followed by any other consonant. We cannot sound *e* in ‘clerk’ exactly as we sound *e* in ‘tent.’ This applies to a crowd of words, some of Teutonic, some of Latin origin, in which the spelling is *e*, but in which the sound has, just as in ‘clerk,’ fluctuated between *a* and *u*. The old people at Philadelphia who said ‘clark’ also said ‘marchant.’ And quite rightly, for they had on their side both older English usage and, in this case, the French spelling itself. The sound ‘murchant’ has come in, both in England and in America, by exactly the same process as that by which the sound ‘clurk’ has come in in America, but not in

England. In these cases the words are of Latin origin ; so is 'German,' which people used to sound 'Jarman'—as in the memorable story of the Oxford University preacher who wished the 'Jarman theology' at the bottom of the 'Jarman Ocean.' But the same thing happens to a crowd of Teutonic proper names, as Derby, Berkeley, Berkshire, Bernard, Bertram, and others. In these names the original Old-English vowel is 'eo'; the modern spelling and the different modern pronunciations are mere approximations, just as when the vowel is the French or Latin *e*. One has heard 'Darby' and 'Durby,' 'Barkeley' and 'Burkeley'; and though the *a* sound is now deemed the more polite, yet I believe that fashion has fluctuated in this matter, as in most others. And fashion, whether fluctuating or not, is at least inconsistent; if it is polite to talk of 'Barkshire' and 'Darby,' it is no longer polite to talk about 'Jarman' and 'Jarsey.' But in all these cases there can be no doubt that the *a* sound is the older. The names of which I have spoken are often spelled with an *a* in old writers; and the *a* sound has for it the witness of the most familiar spelling of several of the names when used as surnames. 'Darby,' 'Barclay,' 'Barnard,' 'Bartram,' all familiar surnames, show what sound was usual when their present spelling was fixed. Tourists, I believe, talk of the 'Durwent' (as they call the Dōve the 'Duv'); but the Derwent at Stamfordbridge is undoubtedly Darwent, while the more northern stream of the name is locally Darwin, a form which has become illustrious as a surname. Now in words of this kind, while British use is somewhat fluctuating, I believe that America has universally decided for the *u* sound. But there can be no doubt that, whether in England or in America, the sound of 'Durby' or 'Burtram' is simply an attempt to adapt the sound to the spelling, while 'Darby' and 'Bartram' are the genuine traditional sounds. I see another instance, not quite of the same kind, of the influence of the schoolmaster, in the name which in some parts of America is given to the last letter of the alphabet. This in New England is always *zee*; in the South it is *zed*, while Pennsylvania seems to halt between two opinions. Now *zed* is a very strange name. Has it anything to do with Greek *zeta*? or does it come from the old form *izzard*, which was not quite forgotten in my childhood, and which I was delighted to find remembered in America also? (*Izzard* is said to be for 's hard,' though surely *z* is rather *s* soft.) But anyhow *zee* is clearly a schoolmaster's device to get rid of the strange-sounding *zed*, and to make *z* follow the analogy of

other letters. But the analogy is wrong. *Z* ought not to follow the analogy of *b*, *d*, *t*, but that of *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, and above all of its brother *s*. If we are not to have *zed*, the name should clearly be, not *zee* but *ez*. But it is a comfort that, besides *izzard*, I also found ‘ampussy and’—I hardly know how to write it—remembered beyond the Ocean. I may very likely be called on to explain on this side. ‘Ampussy and,’ that is, in full, ‘*and* per se, *and*,’ is the name of the sign for the conjunction *and*, &, which used to be printed at the end of the alphabet. May I quote a riming nursery alphabet of my own childhood? The letters have all done their several services towards the apple-pie that was to be divided among them :

Then AND came, though not one of the letters,
And, bowing, acknowledged them all as his betters ;
And, hoping it might not be deemed a presumption,
Remained all their honours’ most humble conjunction.

The ‘humble conjunction’ seems to have fared yet worse than Lord Macaulay’s chaplain, and to have got no apple-pie at all.

Quite distinct from the pronunciation of particular words are any general characteristics in the way of utterance which speakers of English on either side may notice in speakers of English on the other side. Americans constantly notice what they call the ‘English intonation,’ the ‘English accent,’ and I have even seen it called the ‘horrible English intonation.’ Now I am not very clear what this accent or intonation is, and the less so as I have sometimes been told that I myself have it, sometimes that I have it not, but that I speak like an American. As no man knows exactly how he himself speaks, I cannot judge which description is the truer. On the other hand we Britishers are apt to remark in Americans something which we are tempted to call by the shorter word ‘twang,’ a description less civil perhaps than ‘intonation’ without an adjective, but less uncivil surely than ‘horrible intonation.’ As to the origin of this ‘twang’ I have heard various opinions. Some trace it to a theological, some to a merely geographical cause. It has been said to be an inheritance from the Puritans as Puritans; others say that it is simply the natural utterance of East-Anglia, without reference to sect or party. As an American mark, the thing to be most remarked about it is, that, though very common, it is far from universal. It would be in no way wonderful either if everybody spoke with a twang or if nobody spoke with a twang. But the

facts, as far as I can see, are these. Some people have the twang very strongly; some have it not at all. Some, after speaking for a long time without it, will bring it in in a particular word or sentence; in others it is strongly marked when a few words are uttered suddenly, but dies off in the course of a longer conversation. And I distinctly marked that it was far more universal among women than among men. I could mention several American friends from whose speech—unless possibly in particular technical words—no one could tell to which side of the Ocean they belonged, while the utterance of their wives was distinctively American. To us the kind of utterance of which I speak seems specially out of place in the mouth of a graceful and cultivated woman; but I have heard hints back again that the speech of graceful and cultivated Englishwomen has sometimes had just the same effect on American hearers. But, on whichever side our taste lies, there can be little doubt that the American utterance, be it Puritan, East-Anglian, or anything else, is no modern innovation, but has come by genuine tradition from the seventeenth century.

It is otherwise with some peculiarities which concern, not the natural utterance of words to the ear, but their artificial representation to the eye. If the schoolmaster is a deadly foe to language, English or any other, the printer is a foe no less deadly. Half the unhistorical spellings which disfigure our printed language come from the vagaries of half-learned printers, on which side of the Ocean matters very little. As for Latin words, one is sometimes tempted to say, let them spell them as they please; but it is hard when Teutonic ‘rime,’ a word which so many Romance languages have borrowed, is turned into ‘rhyme,’ merely because some printer’s mind was confused between English ‘rime’ and Greek ‘rhythm.’ So with specially American spelling-fancies. If anyone chooses to spell words like ‘traveller’ with one *l*, it looks odd, but it is really not worth disputing about. Nor is it worth disputing about ‘color’ or ‘colour,’ ‘honor’ or ‘honour,’ and the like. But when it comes to ‘armor,’ still more, when it comes to ‘neighbor,’ one’s Latin back in the former case, one’s Teutonic back in the other, is put up. Did he who first wrote ‘armor’ fancy that ‘armor’ was a Latin word like ‘honor’ or ‘color’? By all means let *armatura*, if anyone chooses, be cut short into *armure*; but let us be spared such a false analogy as *armor*. ‘Arbor’ for ‘arbour’ brings out more strongly the delusion of those who, having a Latin tree on the brain, doffed

Teutonic 'harbour' of its aspirate. But the most unkindest cut of all is when Old-English 'neáhgebúr,' which, according to the universal rule of the language, becomes in modern English 'neighbour,' is also turned into 'neighbor.' Did anybody, even a printer or a dictionary-maker, really fancy that the last three letters of 'neighbour' had anything in common with the last three letters of 'honour'? It is surely hardly needful to say that Old-English *ú* is in modern English consistently represented by *ou*; 'hús' becomes 'house'; 'súð' becomes 'south'; 'út' becomes 'out'—and 'neáhgebúr' becomes 'neighbour.' American printers too have some odd ways in other matters, specially as to their way of dividing words when part of a word has to be in one line and part in another. Thus 'nothing' will be divided, not as 'no-thing,' but as 'noth-ing,' as if it were the patronymic of a name 'Noth.' Yet surely even a printer must have known that 'nothing' is 'no-thing' and nothing else. So again 'knowledge' is divided as 'knowl-edge,' suggesting rather the side of a hill than the occupation or condition of one who knows. It is really quite possible that the *d* may have been thrust into 'knowledge'—better written 'knowlege'—from some thought of a *ledge*. Anyhow one suspects that very few people know that *ledge* in 'knowledge' and 'lock' in 'wedlock' are one and the same ending. 'Wedlock' at least is safe from being divided as 'wedl-ock,' because everybody thinks that it has something to do with a lock and key.

It would be easy to pile together a far longer list of differences of usage in matter of speech between England and America. But I have perhaps brought together enough to illustrate my main general positions. I have tried to show that so-called 'Americanisms' are not to be at once cast aside, as many people in England are inclined to cast them aside, as if they were necessarily corruptions of the common speech, as if it proved something against a form of words to show that it is usual in America, but that it is not usual in England. Abuses of language undoubtedly arise in America, just as they do in England. It is hardly worth while trying to count up and find out in which country they are the more common. Possibly the go-ahead side of the younger English land may win for it the first place. But, if so, it is merely a difference of degree, not of kind. I fancy that 'racial' is American; but 'sociology' is undoubtedly British. On the other hand, the conservative side of the American character has led to the survival in America of

many good English words and phrases which have gone out of use in England, and which ignorant people therefore mistake for American inventions. In other cases, again, differences of usage between the two countries are fully explained by differences of circumstances between the two countries. In some cases, again, usages which cannot be called correct, but which differ from mere abuses of language, have been brought in—in either country—through mistaken analogies or other processes of that kind. In these different ways there has come to be a certain distinction between the received British and the received American use of the common English tongue, a distinction which commonly makes it easy to see from which side of Ocean a man comes. But there is no real difference of language, not even any real difference of dialect; the speech of either side is understood without an effort by the men of the other side, and the differences are largely of a kind in which neither usage can be said to be in itself better or worse than the other. Such is the general result of what I have to say about language and about some points specially connected with language. In another article I hope to carry on the same line of argument with regard to some other matters.

EDWARD A. FREEMAN.

The Black Poodle.

I HAVE set myself the task of relating in the course of this story, without suppressing or altering a single detail, the most painful and humiliating episode in my life.

I do this, not because it will give me the least pleasure, but simply because it affords me an opportunity of extenuating myself which has hitherto been wholly denied to me.

As a general rule I am quite aware that to publish a lengthy explanation of one's conduct in any questionable transaction is not the best means of recovering a lost reputation ; but in my own case there is one to whom I shall never more be permitted to justify myself by word of mouth—even if I found myself able to attempt it. And as she could not possibly think worse of me than she does at present, I write this, knowing it can do me no harm, and faintly hoping that it may come to her notice and suggest a doubt whether I am quite so unscrupulous a villain, so consummate a hypocrite, as I have been forced to appear in her eyes.

The bare chance of such a result makes me perfectly indifferent to all else: I cheerfully expose to the derision of the whole reading world the story of my weakness and my shame, since by doing so I may possibly rehabilitate myself somewhat in the good opinion of one person.

Having said so much, I will begin my confession without further delay:—

My name is Algernon Weatherhead, and I may add that I am in one of the Government departments ; that I am an only son, and live at home with my mother.

We had had a house at Hammersmith until just before the period covered by this history, when, our lease expiring, my mother decided that my health required country air at the close of the day, and so we took a 'desirable villa-residence' on one of the many new building estates which have lately sprung up in such profusion in the home counties.

We have called it 'Wistaria Villa.' It is a pretty little place, the last of a row of detached villas, each with its tiny rustic

carriage gate and gravel sweep in front, and lawn enough for a tennis court behind, which lines the road leading over the hill to the railway station.

I could certainly have wished that our landlord, shortly after giving us the agreement, could have found some other place to hang himself in than one of our attics, for the consequence was that a housemaid left us in violent hysterics about every two months, having learnt the tragedy from the tradespeople, and naturally 'seen a somethink' immediately afterwards.

Still it is a pleasant house, and I can now almost forgive the landlord for what I shall always consider an act of gross selfishness on his part.

In the country a next-door neighbour is something more than a mere numeral; he is a possible acquaintance, who will at least consider a new-comer as worth the experiment of a call. I soon knew that 'Shuturgarden,' the next house to our own, was occupied by a Colonel Currie, a retired Indian officer, and often, as across the low boundary wall I caught a glimpse of a graceful girlish figure flitting about amongst the rose-bushes in the neighbouring garden, I would lose myself in pleasant anticipations of a time not far distant when the wall which separated us would be (metaphorically) levelled.

I remember—ah, how vividly!—the thrill of excitement with which I heard from my mother on returning from town one evening that the Curries had called, and seemed disposed to be all that was neighbourly and kind.

I remember, too, the Sunday afternoon on which I returned their call—alone, as my mother had already done so during the week. I was standing on the steps of the Colonel's villa waiting for the door to open, when I was startled by a furious snarling and yapping behind, and, looking round, discovered a large poodle in the act of making for my legs.

He was a coal-black poodle, with half of his right ear gone, and absurd little thick moustaches at the end of his nose; he was shaved in the sham-lion fashion, which is considered, for some mysterious reason, to improve a poodle, but the barber had left sundry little tufts of hair which studded his haunches capriciously.

I could not help being reminded, as I looked at him, of another black poodle which Faust entertained for a short time, with unhappy results, and I thought that a very moderate degree of incantation would be enough to bring the fiend out of this brute.

He made me intensely uncomfortable, for I am of a slightly

nervous temperament, with a constitutional horror of dogs and a liability to attacks of diffidence on performing the ordinary social rites under the most favourable conditions, and certainly the consciousness that a strange and apparently savage dog was engaged in worrying the heels of my boots was the reverse of reassuring.

The Currie family received me with all possible kindness: 'So charmed to make your acquaintance, Mr. Weatherhead,' said Mrs. Currie, as I shook hands. 'I see,' she added pleasantly, 'you've brought the doggie in with you.' As a matter of fact, I had brought the doggie in at the ends of my coat-tails, but it was evidently no unusual occurrence for visitors to appear in this undignified manner, for she detached him quite as a matter of course, and, as soon as I was sufficiently collected, we fell into conversation.

I discovered that the Colonel and his wife were childless, and the slender willowy figure I had seen across the garden wall was that of Lilian Roseblade, their niece and adopted daughter. She came into the room shortly afterwards, and I felt, as I went through the form of an introduction, that her sweet fresh face, shaded by soft masses of dusky brown hair, more than justified all the dreamy hopes and fancies with which I had looked forward to that moment.

She talked to me in a pretty, confidential appealing way, which I have heard her dearest friends censure as childish and affected, but I thought then that her manner had an indescribable charm and fascination about it, and the memory of it makes my heart ache now with a pang that is not all pain.

Even before the Colonel made his appearance I had begun to see that my enemy, the poodle, occupied an exceptional position in that household. It was abundantly clear by the time I took my leave.

He seemed to be the centre of their domestic system, and even lovely Lilian revolved contentedly around him as a kind of satellite; he could do no wrong in his owner's eyes, his prejudices (and he was a narrow-minded animal) were rigorously respected, and all domestic arrangements were made with a primary view to his convenience.

I may be wrong, but I cannot think that it is wise to put any poodle upon such a pedestal as that. How this one in particular, as ordinary a quadruped as ever breathed, had contrived to impose thus upon his infatuated proprietors, I never could understand, but

so it was—he even engrossed the chief part of the conversation, which after any lull seemed to veer round to him by a sort of natural law.

I had to endure a long biographical sketch of him—what a Society paper would call an ‘anecdotal photo’—and each fresh anecdote seemed to me to exhibit the depraved malignity of the beast in a more glaring light, and render the doting admiration of the family more astounding than ever.

‘Did you tell Mr. Weatherhead, Lily, about Bingo’ (Bingo was the poodle’s preposterous name) ‘and Tacks? No? Oh, I *must* tell him that—it’ll make him laugh. Tacks is our gardener down in the village (d’ye know Tacks?). Well, Tacks was up here the other day, nailing up some trellis work at the top of a ladder, and all the time there was Master Bingo sitting quietly at the foot of it looking on, wouldn’t leave it on any account. Tacks said he was quite company for him. Well, at last, when Tacks had finished and was coming down, what do you think that rascal there did? Just sneaked quietly up behind and nipped him in both calves and ran off. Been looking out for that the whole time! Ha, ha!—deep that, eh?’

I agreed with an inward shudder that it was very deep, thinking privately that, if this was a specimen of Bingo’s usual treatment of the natives, it would be odd if he did not find himself deeper still before—probably *just* before—he died.

‘Poor faithful old doggie!’ murmured Mrs. Currie; ‘he thought Tacks was a nasty burglar, didn’t he? he wasn’t going to see Master robbed, was he?’

‘Capital house-dog, sir,’ struck in the Colonel. ‘Gad, I shall never forget how he made poor Heavisides run for it the other day! Ever met Heavisides of the Bombay Fusiliers? Well, Heavisides was staying here, and the dog met him one morning as he was coming down from the bath-room. Didn’t recognise him in “pyjamas” and a dressing-gown, of course, and made at him. He kept poor old Heavisides outside the landing window on the top of the cistern for a quarter of an hour, till I had to come and raise the siege!’

Such were the stories of that abandoned dog’s blunderheaded ferocity to which I was forced to listen, while all the time the brute sat opposite me on the hearthrug, blinking at me from under his shaggy mane, with his evil bleared eyes, and deliberating where he would have me when I rose to go.

This was the beginning of an intimacy which soon displaced

all ceremony. It was very pleasant to go in there after dinner, even to sit with the Colonel over his claret and hear more stories about Bingo, for afterwards I could go into the pretty drawing-room and take my tea from Lilian's hands and listen while she played Schubert to us in the summer twilight.

The poodle was always in the way, to be sure, but even his ugly black head seemed to lose some of its ugliness and ferocity when Lilian laid her pretty hand on it.

On the whole I think that the Currie family were well disposed towards me; the Colonel considering me as a harmless specimen of the average eligible young man—which I certainly was—and Mrs. Currie showing me favour for my mother's sake, for whom she had taken a strong liking.

As for Lilian, I believed I saw that she soon suspected the state of my feelings towards her and was not displeased by it. I looked forward with some hopefulness to a day when I could declare myself with no fear of a repulse.

But it was a serious obstacle in my path that I could not secure Bingo's good opinion on any terms. The family would often lament this pathetically themselves. 'You see,' Mrs. Currie would observe in apology, 'Bingo is a dog that does not attach himself easily to strangers'—though for that matter I thought he was unpleasantly ready to attach himself to *me*.

I did try hard to conciliate him. I brought him propitiatory buns—which was weak and ineffectual, as he ate them with avidity, and hated me as bitterly as ever, for he had conceived from the first a profound contempt for me and a distrust which no blandishments of mine could remove. Looking back now, I am inclined to think it was a prophetic instinct that warned him of what was to come upon him through my instrumentality.

Only his approbation was wanting to establish for me a firm footing with the Curries, and perhaps determine Lilian's wavering heart in my direction; but, though I wooed that inflexible poodle with an assiduity I blush to remember, he remained obstinately firm.

Still, day by day, Lilian's treatment of me was more encouraging; day by day I gained in the esteem of her uncle and aunt; I began to hope that soon I should be able to disregard canine influence altogether.

Now there was one inconvenience about our villa (besides its flavour of suicide) which it is necessary to mention here. By

common consent all the cats of the neighbourhood had selected our garden for their evening reunions. I fancy that a tortoiseshell kitchen cat of ours must have been a sort of leader of local feline society—I know she was ‘at home,’ with music and recitations, on most evenings.

My poor mother found this interfere with her after-dinner nap, and no wonder, for if a cohort of ghosts had been ‘shrieking and squealing,’ as Calpurnia puts it, in our back garden, or it had been fitted up as a crèche for a nursery of goblin infants in the agonies of teething, the noise could not possibly have been more unearthly.

We sought for some means of getting rid of the nuisance: there was poison of course, but we thought it would have an invidious appearance and even lead to legal difficulties, if each dawn were to discover an assortment of cats expiring in hideous convulsions in various parts of the same garden.

Firearms, too, were open to objection and would scarcely assist my mother’s slumbers, so for some time we were at a loss for a remedy. At last, one day, walking down the Strand, I chanced to see (in an evil hour) what struck me as the very thing—it was an air-gun of superior construction displayed in a gunsmith’s window. I went in at once, purchased it, and took it home in triumph; it would be noiseless, and would reduce the local average of cats without scandal—one or two examples, and feline fashion would soon migrate to a more secluded spot.

I lost no time in putting this to the proof. That same evening I lay in wait after dusk at the study window, protecting my mother’s repose. As soon as I heard the long-drawn wail, the preliminary sputter, and the wild stampede that followed, I let fly in the direction of the sound. I suppose I must have something of the national sporting instinct in me, for my blood was tingling with excitement; but the feline constitution assimilates lead without serious inconvenience, and I began to fear that no trophy would remain to bear witness to my marksmanship.

But all at once I made out a dark indistinct form slinking in from behind the bushes. I waited till it crossed a belt of light which streamed from the back kitchen below me, and then I took careful aim and pulled the trigger.

This time at least I had not failed—there was a smothered yell, a rustle—and then silence again. I ran out with the calm pride of a successful revenge to bring in the body of my victim, and I found underneath a laurel, no predatory tom-cat, but (as

the discerning reader will no doubt have foreseen long since) the quivering carcase of the Colonel's black poodle !

I intend to set down here the exact unvarnished truth, and I confess that at first, when I knew what I had done, I was *not* sorry. I was quite innocent of any intention of doing it, but I felt no regret. I even laughed—madman that I was—at the thought that there was the end of Bingo at all events ; that impediment was removed, my weary task of conciliation was over for ever !

But soon the reaction came ; I realised the tremendous nature of my deed, and shuddered. I had done that which might banish me from Lilian's side for ever ! All unwittingly I had slaughtered a kind of sacred beast, the animal around which the Currie household had wreathed their choicest affections ! How was I to break it to them ? Should I send Bingo in with a card tied to his neck and my regrets and compliments ? That was too much like a present of game. Ought I not to carry him in myself ? I would wreathe him in the best crape, I would put on black for him—the Curries would hardly consider a taper and a white sheet, or sackcloth and ashes, an excessive form of atonement—but I could not grovel to quite such an abject extent.

I wondered what the Colonel would say. Simple and hearty as a general rule, he had a hot temper on occasions, and it made me ill as I thought, would he and, worse still, would *Lilian* believe it was really an accident ? They knew what an interest I had in silencing the deceased poodle—would they believe the simple truth ?

I vowed that they *should* believe me. My genuine remorse and the absence of all concealment on my part would speak powerfully for me. I would choose a favourable time for my confession ; that very evening I would tell all.

Still I shrank from the duty before me, and as I knelt down sorrowfully by the dead form and respectfully composed his stiffening limbs, I thought that it was unjust of Fate to place a well-meaning man, whose nerves were not of iron, in such a position.

Then, to my horror, I heard a well-known ringing tramp on the road outside, and smelt the peculiar fragrance of a Burmese cheroot. It was the Colonel himself, who had been taking out the doomed Bingo for his usual evening run.

I don't know how it was exactly, but a sudden panic came over me. I held my breath, and tried to crouch down unseen

behind the laurels ; but he had seen me, and came over at once to speak to me across the hedge.

He stood there, not two yards from his favourite's body ! Fortunately it was unusually dark that evening.

'Ha, there you are, eh?' he began heartily; 'don't rise, my boy, don't rise.' I was trying to put myself in front of the poodle, and did not rise—at least, only my hair did.

'You're out late, ain't you?' he went on; 'laying out your garden, hey?'

I could not tell him that I was laying out his poodle ! My voice shook as, with a guilty confusion that was veiled by the dusk, I said it was a fine evening—which it was not.

'Cloudy, sir,' said the Colonel, 'cloudy—rain before morning, I think. By the way, have you seen anything of my Bingo in here?'

This was the turning point. What I *ought* to have done was to say mournfully, 'Yes, I'm sorry to say I've had a most unfortunate accident with him—here he is—the fact is, I'm afraid I've *shot* him!'

But I couldn't. I could have told him at my own time, in a prepared form of words—but not then. I felt I must use all my wits to gain time and fence with the questions.

'Why,' I said, with a leaden airiness, 'he hasn't given you the slip, has he?'

'Never did such a thing in his life!' said the Colonel warmly; 'he rushed off after a rat or a frog or something a few minutes ago, and as I stopped to light another cheroot I lost sight of him. I thought I saw him slip in under your gate, but I've been calling him from the front there and he won't come out.'

No, and he never *would* come out any more. But the Colonel must not be told that just yet. I temporised again: 'If,' I said unsteadily, 'if he had slipped in under the gate, I should have seen him. Perhaps he took it into his head to run home?'

'Oh, I shall find him on the doorstep, I expect, the knowing old scamp! Why, what d'ye think was the last thing he did now?'

I could have given him the very latest intelligence; but I dared not. However, it was altogether too ghastly to kneel there and laugh at anecdotes of Bingo told across Bingo's dead body; I could not stand that! 'Listen,' I said suddenly, 'wasn't that his bark? There again; it seems to come from the front of your house, don't you think?'

‘Well,’ said the Colonel, ‘I’ll go and fasten him up before he’s off again. How your teeth are chattering—you’ve caught a chill, man—go indoors at once, and, if you feel equal to it, look in half an hour later, about grog time, and I’ll tell you all about it. Compliments to your mother. Don’t forget—about grog time!’ I had got rid of him at last, and I wiped my forehead, gasping with relief. I would go round in half an hour and then I should be prepared to make my melancholy announcement. For, even then, I never thought of any other course, until suddenly it flashed upon me with terrible clearness that my miserable shuffling by the hedge had made it impossible to tell the truth! I had not told a direct lie, to be sure, but then I had given the Colonel the impression that I had denied having seen the dog. Many people can appease their consciences by reflecting that, whatever may be the effect their words produce, they did contrive to steer clear of a downright lie. I never quite knew where the distinction lay, morally, but there *is* that feeling—I have it myself.

Unfortunately, prevarication has this drawback, that, if ever the truth comes to light, the prevaricator is in just the same case as if he had lied to the most shameless extent, and for a man to point out that the words he used contained no absolute falsehood will seldom restore confidence.

I might of course still tell the Colonel of my misfortune, and leave him to infer that it had happened after our interview, but the poodle was fast becoming cold and stiff, and they would most probably suspect the real time of the occurrence.

And then Lilian would hear that I had told a string of falsehoods to her uncle over the dead body of their idolised Bingo—an act, no doubt, of abominable desecration, of unspeakable profanity in her eyes!

If it would have been difficult before to prevail on her to accept a bloodstained hand, it would be impossible after that. No, I had burnt my ships, I was cut off for ever from the straightforward course; that one moment of indecision had decided my conduct in spite of me—I must go on with it now and keep up the deception at all hazards.

It was bitter. I had always tried to preserve as many of the moral principles which had been instilled into me as can be conveniently retained in this grasping world, and it had been my pride that, roughly speaking, I had never been guilty of an unmistakable falsehood.

But henceforth, if I meant to win Lilian, that boast must be

relinquished for ever! I should have to lie now with all my might, without limit or scruple, to dissemble incessantly, and 'wear a mask,' as the poet Bunn beautifully expressed it long ago, 'over my hollow heart.' I felt all this keenly—I did not think it was right—but what was I to do?

After thinking all this out very carefully, I decided that my only course was to bury the poor animal where he fell and say nothing about it. With some vague idea of precaution I first took off the silver collar he wore, and then hastily interred him with a garden-trowel and succeeded in removing all traces of the disaster.

I fancy I felt a certain relief in the knowledge that there would now be no necessity to tell my pitiful story and risk the loss of my neighbours' esteem.

By-and-by, I thought, I would plant a rose-tree over his remains, and some day, as Lilian and I, in the noontide of our domestic bliss, stood before it admiring its creamy luxuriance, I might (perhaps) find courage to confess that the tree owed some of that luxuriance to the long-lost Bingo.

There was a touch of poetry in this idea that lightened my gloom for the moment.

I need scarcely say that I did not go round to Shuturgarden that evening. I was not hardened enough for that yet—my manner might betray me, and so I very prudently stayed at home.

But that night my sleep was broken by frightful dreams. I was perpetually trying to bury a great gaunt poodle, which would persist in rising up through the damp mould as fast as I covered him up. . . . Lilian and I were engaged, and we were in church together on Sunday, and the poodle, resisting all attempts to eject him, forbade our banns with sepulchral barks. . . . It was our wedding-day, and at the critical moment the poodle leaped between us and swallowed the ring. . . . Or we were at the wedding breakfast, and Bingo, a grizzly black skeleton with flaming eyes, sat on the cake and would not allow Lilian to cut it. Even the rose-tree fancy was reproduced in a distorted form—the tree grew and every blossom contained a miniature Bingo, which barked; and as I woke I was desperately trying to persuade the Colonel that they were ordinary dog-roses.

I went up to the office next day with my gloomy secret gnawing my bosom, and whatever I did, the spectre of the murdered poodle rose before me. For two days after that I dared not go near the

Curries, until at last one evening after dinner I forced myself to call, feeling that it was really not safe to keep away any longer.

My conscience smote me as I went in. I put on an unconscious easy manner, which was such a dismal failure that it was lucky for me that they were too much engrossed to notice it.

I never before saw a family so stricken down by a domestic misfortune as the group I found in the drawing-room, making a dejected pretence of reading or working. We talked at first—and hollow talk it was—on indifferent subjects, till I could bear it no longer, and plunged boldly into danger.

‘I don’t see the dog,’ I began. ‘I suppose you—you found him all right the other evening, Colonel?’ I wondered as I spoke whether they would not notice the break in my voice, but they did not.

‘Why, the fact is,’ said the Colonel heavily, gnawing his grey moustache, ‘we’ve not heard anything of him since: he’s—he’s run off!’

‘Gone, Mr. Weatherhead; gone without a word!’ said Mrs. Currie plaintively, as if she thought the dog might at least have left an address.

‘I wouldn’t have believed it of him,’ said the Colonel; ‘it has completely knocked me over. Haven’t been so cut up for years—the ungrateful rascal!’

‘Oh, Uncle!’ pleaded Lilian, ‘don’t talk like that; perhaps Bingo couldn’t help it—perhaps some one has s-s-shot him!’

‘Shot!’ cried the Colonel angrily. ‘By heaven! if I thought there was a villain on earth capable of shooting that poor inoffensive dog, I’d—— Why *should* they shoot him, Lilian? Tell me that! I—I hope you won’t let me hear you talk like that again. You don’t think he’s shot, eh, Weatherhead?’

I said—Heaven forgive me!—that I thought it highly improbable.

‘He’s not dead!’ cried Mrs. Currie. ‘If he were dead I should know it somehow—I’m sure I should! But I’m certain he’s alive. Only last night I had such a beautiful dream about him. I thought he came back to us, Mr. Weatherhead, driving up in a hansom cab, and he was just the same as ever—only he wore blue spectacles, and the shaved part of him was painted a bright red. And I woke up with the joy—so, you know, it’s sure to come true!’

It will be easily understood what torture conversations like

these were to me, and how I hated myself as I sympathised and spoke encouraging words concerning the dog's recovery, when I knew all the time he was lying hid under my garden mould. But I took it as part of my punishment, and bore it all uncomplainingly; practice even made me an adept in the art of consolation—I believe I really was a great comfort to them.

I had hoped that they would soon get over the first bitterness of their loss, and that Bingo would be first replaced and then forgotten in the usual way; but there seemed no signs of this coming to pass.

The poor Colonel was too plainly fretting himself ill about it; he went pottering about forlornly—advertising, searching, and seeing people, but all of course to no purpose, and it told upon him. He was more like a man whose only son and heir had been stolen, than an Anglo-Indian officer who had lost a poodle. I had to affect the liveliest interest in all his inquiries and expeditions, and to listen to, and echo, the most extravagant eulogies of the departed, and the wear and tear of so much duplicity made me at last almost as ill as the Colonel himself.

I could not help seeing that Lilian was not nearly so much impressed by my elaborate concern as her relatives; and sometimes I detected an incredulous look in her frank brown eyes that made me very uneasy. Little by little, a rift widened between us, until at last in despair I determined to know the worst before the time came when it would be hopeless to speak at all. I chose a Sunday evening as we were walking across the green from church in the golden dusk, and then I ventured to speak to her of my love. She heard me to the end, and was evidently very much agitated. At last she murmured that it could not be, unless—no, it never could be now.

‘Unless what?’ I asked. ‘Lilian—Miss Roseblade, something has come between us lately: you will tell me what that something is, won’t you?’

‘Do you want to know *really*?’ she said, looking up at me through her tears. ‘Then I’ll tell you: it—it’s Bingo!’

I started back overwhelmed. Did she know all? If not, how much did she suspect? I must find out that at once! ‘What about Bingo?’ I managed to pronounce, with a dry tongue.

‘You never loved him when he was here,’ she sobbed; ‘you know you didn’t!’

I was relieved to find it was no worse than this.

'No,' I said candidly, 'I did ~~not~~ love Bingo. Bingo didn't love *me*, Lilian; he was *always* looking out for a chance of nipping me somewhere. Surely you won't quarrel with me for that!'

'Not for *that*,' she said; 'only, why do you pretend to be so fond of him *now*, and so anxious to get him back again? Uncle John believes you, but *I* don't. I can see quite well that you wouldn't be glad to find him. You could find him easily if you wanted to!'

'What do you mean, Lilian?' I said hoarsely. '*How* could I find him?' Again I feared the worst.

'You're in a Government office,' cried Lilian, 'and if you only chose, you could easily g-get G-Government to find Bingo! What's the use of Government if it can't do that? Mr. Travers would have found him long ago if I'd asked him!'

Lilian had never been so childishly unreasonable as this before, and yet I loved her more madly than ever; but I did not like this allusion to Travers, a rising barrister, who lived with his sister in a pretty cottage near the station, and had shown symptoms of being attracted by Lilian.

He was away on circuit just then, luckily, but at least even he would have found it a hard task to find Bingo—there was comfort in that.

'You know that isn't just, Lilian,' I observed. 'But only tell me what you want me to do?'

'Bub—bub—bring back Bingo!' she said.

'Bring back Bingo!' I cried in horror. 'But suppose I *can't*—suppose he's out of the country, or—or dead, what then, Lilian?'

'I can't help it,' she said; 'but I don't believe he *is* out of the country or dead. And while I see you pretending to Uncle that you cared awfully about him, and going on doing nothing at all, it makes me think you're not quite—quite *sincere*! And I couldn't possibly marry anyone while I thought that of him. And I shall always have that feeling unless you find Bingo!'

It was of no use to argue with her; I knew Lilian by that time. With her pretty caressing manner she united a latent obstinacy which it was hopeless to attempt to shake. I feared, too, that she was not quite certain as yet whether she cared for me or not, and that this condition of hers was an expedient to gain time.

I left her with a heavy heart. Unless I proved my worth by bringing back Bingo within a very short time, Travers would probably have everything his own way. And Bingo was dead!

However, I took heart. I thought that perhaps if I could succeed by my earnest efforts in persuading Lilian that I really was doing all in my power to recover the poodle, she might relent in time, and dispense with his actual production.

So, partly with this object, and partly to appease the remorse which now revived and stung me deeper than before, I undertook long and weary pilgrimages after office hours. I spent many pounds in advertisements; I interviewed dogs of every size, colour, and breed, and of course I took care to keep Lilian informed of each successive failure. But still her heart was not touched, she was firm; if I went on like that, she told me I was certain to find Bingo one day—then, but not before, would her doubts be set at rest.

I was walking one day through the somewhat squalid district which lies between Bow Street and High Holborn, when I saw, in a small theatrical costumier's window, a handbill stating that a black poodle had 'followed a gentleman' on a certain date, and if not claimed and the finder remunerated before a stated time, would be sold to pay expenses.

I went in and got a copy of the bill to show Lilian, and although by that time I scarcely dared to look a poodle in the face, I thought I would go to the address given and see the animal, simply to be able to tell Lilian I had done so.

The gentleman whom the dog had very unaccountably followed was a certain Mr. William Blagg, who kept a little shop near Endell Street, and called himself a bird-fancier, though I should scarcely have credited him with the necessary imagination. He was an evil-browed ruffian in a fur cap, with a broad broken nose and little shifty red eyes, and after I had told him what I wanted, he took me through a horrible little den, stacked with piles of wooden, wire, and wicker prisons, each quivering with restless, twittering life, and then out into a back yard, in which were two or three rotten old kennels and tubs. 'That there's him,' he said, jerking his thumb to the farthest tub; 'follered me all the way 'ome from Kinsington Gardings, he did. Kim out, will yer?'

And out of the tub there crawled slowly, with a snuffling whimper and a rattling of his chain, the identical dog I had slain a few evenings before!

At least, so I thought for a moment, and felt as if I had seen a spectre; the resemblance was so exact—in size, in every detail, even to the little clumps of hair about the hind parts, even to the

lop of half an ear, this dog might have been the 'doppel-gänger' of the deceased Bingo. I suppose, after all, one black poodle is very like any other black poodle of the same size, but the likeness startled me.

I think it was then that the idea occurred to me that here was a miraculous chance of securing the sweetest girl in the whole world, and at the same time atoning for my wrong by bringing back gladness with me to Shnuturgarden. It only needed a little boldness; one last deception, and I could embrace truthfulness once more.

Almost unconsciously, when my guide turned round and asked 'Is that there dawg yourn?' I said hurriedly: 'Yes, yes—that's the dog I want, that—that's Bingo!'

'He don't seem to be a puttin' of 'isself out about seeing you again,' observed Mr. Blagg, as the poodle studied me with a calm interest.

'Oh, he's not exactly *my* dog, you see,' I said; 'he belongs to a friend of mine!'

He gave me a quick furtive glance. 'Then maybe you're mistook about him,' he said; 'and I can't run no risks. I was a goin' down in the country this 'ere werry evenin' to see a party as lives at Wistaria Willa,—he's been a hadwertisin about a black poodle, *he* has!'

'But look here,' I said, 'that's *me*.'

He gave me a curious leer. 'No offence, you know, guv'nor,' he said, 'but I should wish for some evidence as to that afore I part with a vallyable dawg like this 'ere!'

'Well,' I said, 'here's one of my cards; will that do for you?'

He took it and spelt it out with a pretence of great caution, but I saw well enough that the old scoundrel suspected that if I had lost a dog at all, it was not this particular dog. 'Ah,' he said, as he put it in his pocket, 'if I part with him to you, I must be cleared of all risks. I can't afford to get into trouble about no mistakes. Unless you likes to leave him for a day or two, you must pay accordin', you see.'

I wanted to get the hateful business over as soon as possible. I did not care what I paid—Lilian was worth all the expense! I said I had no doubt myself as to the real ownership of the animal, but I would give him any sum in reason, and would remove the dog at once.

And so we settled it. I paid him an extortionate sum, and came

away with a duplicate poodle, a canine counterfeit which I hoped to pass off at Shuturgarden as the long-lost Bingo.

I know it was wrong—it even came unpleasantly near dog stealing—but I was a desperate man. I saw Lilian gradually slipping away from me, I knew that nothing short of this could ever recall her, I was sorely tempted, I had gone far on the same road already, it was the old story of being hung for a sheep. And so I fell.

Surely some who read this will be generous enough to consider the peculiar state of the case, and mingle a little pity with their contempt.

I was dining in town that evening and took my purchase home by a late train; his demeanour was grave and intensely respectable; he was not the animal to commit himself by any flagrant indiscretion—he was gentle and tractable, too, and in all respects an agreeable contrast in character to the original. Still, it may have been the after-dinner workings of conscience, but I could not help fancying that I saw a certain look in the creature's eyes, as if he were aware that he was required to connive at a fraud, and rather resented it.

If he would only be good enough to back me up! Fortunately, however, he was such a perfect facsimile of the outward Bingo, that the risk of detection was really inconsiderable.

When I got him home, I put Bingo's silver collar round his neck—congratulating myself on my forethought in preserving it, and took him in to see my mother. She accepted him as what he seemed, without the slightest misgiving; but this, though it encouraged me to go on, was not decisive, the spurious poodle would have to encounter the scrutiny of those who knew every tuft on the genuine animal's body!

Nothing would have induced me to undergo such an ordeal as that of personally restoring him to the Curries. We gave him supper, and tied him up on the lawn, where he howled dolefully all night, and buried bones.

The next morning I wrote a note to Mrs. Currie, expressing my pleasure at being able to restore the lost one, and another to Lilian, containing only the words, 'Will you believe *now* that I am sincere?' Then I tied both round the poodle's neck and dropped him over the wall into the Colonel's garden just before I started to catch my train to town.

* * * * *

I had an anxious walk home from the station that evening; I went round by the longer way, trembling the whole time lest I

should meet any of the Currie household, to which I felt myself entirely unequal just then. I could not rest until I knew whether my fraud had succeeded, or if the poodle to which I had entrusted my fate had basely betrayed me ; but my suspense was happily ended as soon as I entered my mother's room. 'You can't think how delighted those poor Curries were to see Bingo again,' she said at once, and they said such charming things about you, Algy—Lilian, particularly—quite affected she seemed, poor child ! And they wanted you to go round and dine there and be thanked to-night, but at last I persuaded them to come to us instead. And they're going to bring the dog to make friends. Oh, and I met Frank Travers ; he's back from circuit again now, so I asked him in too, to meet them !'

I drew a deep breath of relief. I had played a desperate game—but I had won ! I could have wished, to be sure, that my mother had not thought of bringing in Travers on that of all evenings—but I hoped that I could defy him after this.

The Colonel and his people were the first to arrive ; he and his wife being so effusively grateful that they made me very uncomfortable indeed ; Lilian met me with downcast eyes, and the faintest possible blush, but she said nothing just then. Five minutes afterwards, when she and I were alone together in the conservatory, where I had brought her on pretence of showing a new begonia, she laid her hand on my sleeve and whispered, almost shyly, 'Mr. Weatherhead,—Algernon ! Can you ever forgive me for being so cruel and unjust to you ?' And I replied that, upon the whole, I could.

We were not in that conservatory long, but, before we left it, beautiful Lilian Roseblade had consented to make my life happy. When we re-entered the drawing-room, we found Frank Travers, who had been told the story of the recovery, and I noticed his jaws fall as he glanced at our faces, and noted the triumphant smile which I have no doubt mine wore, and the tender dreamy look in Lilian's soft eyes. Poor Travers, I was sorry for him, although I was not fond of him. Travers was a good type of the rising young Common Law barrister ; tall, not bad-looking, with keen dark eyes, black whiskers, and the mobile forensic mouth, which can express every shade of feeling, from deferential assent to cynical incredulity ; possessed, too, of an endless flow of conversation that was decidedly agreeable, if a trifle too laboriously so, he had been a dangerous rival. But all that was over now—he saw it himself at once, and during dinner sank into dismal silence, gazing pathetically at Lilian, and sighing almost obtrusively between the

courses. His stream of small talk seemed to have been cut off at the main.

‘You’ve done a kind thing, Weatherhead,’ said the Colonel. ‘I can’t tell you all that dog is to me and how I missed the poor beast. I’d quite given up all hope of ever seeing him again, and all the time there was Weatherhead, Mr. Travers, quietly searching all London till he found him! I shan’t forget it. It shows a really kind feeling.’

I saw by Travers’s face that he was telling himself he would have found fifty Bingos in half the time—if he had only thought of it; he smiled a melancholy assent to all the Colonel said, and then began to study me with an obviously depreciatory air.

‘You can’t think,’ I heard Mrs. Currie telling my mother, ‘how really *touching* it was to see poor dear Bingo’s emotion at seeing all the old familiar objects again! He went up and sniffed at them all in turn, quite plainly recognising everything. And he was quite put out to find that we had moved his favourite ottoman out of the drawing-room. But he *is* so penitent, too, and so ashamed of having run away; he hardly dares to come when John calls him, and he kept under a chair in the hall all the morning—he wouldn’t come in here either, so we had to leave him in your garden.’

‘He’s been sadly out of spirits all day,’ said Lilian; ‘he hasn’t bitten one of the tradespeople.’

‘Oh, *he’s* all right, the rascal!’ said the Colonel, cheerily; ‘he’ll be after the cats again as well as ever in a day or two.’

‘Ah, those cats!’ said my poor innocent mother. ‘Algy, you haven’t tried the air-gun on them again lately, have you? They’re worse than ever.’

I troubled the Colonel to pass the claret; Travers laughed for the first time. ‘That’s a good idea,’ he said, in that carrying ‘bar-mess’ voice of his; ‘an air-gun for cats, ha, ha! Make good bags, eh, Weatherhead?’ I said that I did, *very* good bags, and felt I was getting painfully red in the face.

‘Oh, Algy is an excellent shot—quite a sportsman,’ said my mother. ‘I remember, oh, long ago, when we lived at Hammer-smith, he had a pistol, and he used to strew crumbs in the garden for the sparrows, and shoot at them out of the pantry window; he frequently hit one.’

‘Well,’ said the Colonel, not much impressed by these sporting reminiscences, ‘don’t go rolling over our Bingo by mistake, you know, Weatherhead, my boy. Not but what you’ve a sort of

right after this—only don't. I wouldn't go through it all twice for anything.'

'If you really won't take any more wine,' I said hurriedly, addressing the Colonel and Travers, 'suppose we all go out and have our coffee on the lawn? It—it will be cooler there.' For it was getting very hot indoors, I thought.

I left Travers to amuse the ladies—he could do no more harm now; and taking the Colonel aside, I seized the opportunity, as we strolled up and down the garden path, to ask his consent to Lilian's engagement to me. He gave it cordially. 'There's not a man in England,' he said, 'that I'd sooner see her married to, after to-day. You're a quiet steady young fellow, and you've a good kind heart. As for the money, that's neither here nor there; Lilian won't come to you without a penny, you know. But really, my boy, you can hardly believe what it is to my poor wife and me to see that dog. Why, bless my soul, look at him now! What's the matter with him, eh?'

To my unutterable horror I saw that that miserable poodle, after begging unnoticed at the tea-table for some time, had retired to an open space before it, where he was now industriously standing on his head.

We gathered round and examined the animal curiously, as he continued to balance himself gravely in his abnormal position. 'Good gracious, John,' cried Mrs. Currie, 'I never saw Bingo do such a thing before in his life!'

'Very odd,' said the Colonel, putting up his glasses; 'never learnt that from *me*.'

'I tell you what I fancy it is,' I suggested wildly. 'You see, he was always a sensitive, excitable animal, and perhaps the—the sudden joy of his return has gone to his head—*upset* him, you know.'

They seemed disposed to accept this solution, and indeed I believe they would have credited Bingo with every conceivable degree of sensibility; but I felt myself that if this unhappy animal had many more of these accomplishments I was undone, for the original Bingo had never been a dog of parts.

'It's very odd,' said Travers reflectively, as the dog recovered his proper level; 'but I always thought that it was half the *right* ear that Bingo had lost?'

'So it is, isn't it?' said the Colonel. 'Left, eh? Well, I thought myself it was the right.'

My heart almost stopped with terror—I had altogether for-

gotten that. I hastened to set the point at rest. 'Oh, it *was* the left,' I said positively; 'I know it because I remember so particularly thinking how odd it was that it *should* be the left ear, and not the right!' I told myself this should be positively my last lie.

'Why odd?' asked Frank Travers, with his most offensive Socratic manner.

'My dear fellow, I can't tell you,' I said impatiently; 'everything seems odd when you come to think at all about it.'

'Algernon,' said Lilian later on, 'will you tell Aunt Mary and Mr. Travers, and—and me, how it was you came to find Bingo? Mr. Travers is quite anxious to hear all about it.'

I could not very well refuse; I sat down and told the story, all my own way. I painted Blagg, perhaps, rather bigger and blacker than life, and described an exciting scene, in which I recognised Bingo by his collar in the streets, and claimed and bore him off then and there in spite of all opposition.

I had the inexpressible pleasure of seeing Travers grinding his teeth with envy as I went on, and feeling Lilian's soft, slender hand glide silently into mine as I told my tale in the twilight.

All at once, just as I reached the climax, we heard the poodle barking furiously at the hedge which separated my garden from the road. 'There's a foreign-looking man staring over the hedge,' said Lilian; 'Bingo always *did* hate foreigners.'

There certainly was a swarthy man there, and, though I had no reason for it then, somehow my heart died within me at the sight of him.

'Don't be alarmed, sir,' cried the Colonel; 'the dog won't bite you, unless there's a hole in the hedge anywhere.'

The stranger took off his small straw hat with a sweep. 'Ah, I am not afraid,' he said, and his accent proclaimed him a Frenchman; 'he is not enrage at me. May I ask, is it pairmeet to speak wiz Misterre Vezzered?'

I felt I must deal with this person alone, for I feared the worst, and asking them to excuse me, I went to the hedge and faced the Frenchman with the frightful calm of despair. He was a short, stout little man, with blue cheeks, sparkling black eyes, and a vivacious walnut-coloured countenance; he wore a short black alpaca coat and a large white cravat with an immense oval malachite brooch in the centre of it, which I mention because I found myself staring mechanically at it during the interview.

'My name is Weatherhead,' I began, with the bearing of a detected pickpocket. 'Can I be of any service to you?'

'Of a great service,' he said emphatically; 'you can restore to me the poodle vich I see zere!'

Nemesis had called at last in the shape of a rival claimant. I staggered for an instant; then I said, 'Oh, I think you are under a mistake—that dog is not mine.'

'I know it,' he said; 'zere 'as been leetle mistake, so if ze dog is not to you, you give him back to me, *hein*?'

'I tell you,' I said, 'that poodle belongs to the gentleman over there.' And I pointed to the Colonel, seeing that it was best now to bring him into the affair without delay.

'You are wrong,' he said doggedly; 'ze poodle is my poodle! And I was direct to you—it is your name on ze carte?' And he presented me with that fatal card which I had been foolish enough to give to Blagg as a proof of my identity. I saw it all now; the old villain had betrayed me, and to earn a double reward had put the real owner on my track.

I decided to call the Colonel at once and attempt to brazen it out with the help of his sincere belief in the dog.

'Eh, what's that; what's it all about?' said the Colonel, bustling up, followed at intervals by the others.

The Frenchman raised his hat again. 'I do not vant to make trouble,' he began, 'but zere is leetle mistake. My word of honour, sare, I see my own poodle in your garden. Ven I appeal to zis gentilman to restore 'im he reffer me to you.'

'You must allow me to know my own dog, sir,' said the Colonel. 'Why, I've had him from a pup. Bingo, old boy, you know your master, don't you?'

But the brute ignored him altogether, and began to leap wildly at the hedge, in frantic efforts to join the Frenchman. It needed no Solomon to decide *his* ownership!

'I tell you, you 'ave got ze wrong poodle—it is my own dog, my Azor! He remember me well, you see? I lose him it is three, four days. . . . I see a nottice zat he is found, and ven I go to ze address, zey tell me, "Oh, he is claim, he is gone wiz a strangaire who has advertise." Zey show me ze placard, I follow 'ere, and ven I arrive, I see my poodle in ze garden before me!'

'But look here,' said the Colonel impatiently; 'it's all very well to say that, but how can you prove it? I give you *my* word that the dog belongs to *me*! You must prove your claim, eh, Travers?'

'Yes,' said Travers judicially, 'mere assertion is no proof: it's oath against oath, at present.'

'Attend an instant—your poodle was he 'ighly train, was he well instruct—a dog viz tricks, eh?'

'No, he's not,' said the Colonel; 'I don't like to see dogs taught to play the fool—there's none of that nonsense about *him*, sir!'

'Ah, remark him well, then. Azor, mon chou, danse donc!'

And on the foreigner's whistling a lively air, that infernal poodle rose on his hind legs and danced solemnly about half-way round the garden! We inside followed his movements with dismay. 'Why, dash it all!' cried the disgusted Colonel, 'he's dancing along like a d——d mountebank! But it's my Bingo for all that!'

'You are not convince? You shall see more. Azor, ici, Bees-marck, Azor!' (the poodle barked ferociously). 'Gambetta!' (he wagged his tail and began to leap with joy). 'Meurs pour la Patrie!'—and the too accomplished animal rolled over as if killed in battle!

'Where could Bingo have picked up so much French?' cried Lilian incredulously.

'Or so much French history?' added that serpent Travers.

'Shall I command 'im to jomp, or reverse 'imself?' inquired the obliging Frenchman.

'We've seen that, thank you,' said the Colonel gloomily. 'Upon my word, I don't know what to think. It can't be that that's not my Bingo after all—I'll never believe it!'

I tried a last desperate stroke. 'Will you come round to the front?' I said to the Frenchman; 'I'll let you in, and we can discuss the matter quietly.' Then, as we walked back together, I asked him eagerly what he would take to abandon his claims and let the Colonel think the poodle was his after all.

He was furious—he considered himself insulted; with great emotion he informed me that the dog was the pride of his life (it seems to be the mission of black poodles to serve as domestic comforts of this priceless kind!), that he would not part with him for twice his weight in gold.

'Conceive,' he began as we joined the others, 'zat zis gentilman 'ere 'as offer me money for ze dog! He agrees zat it is to me, you see? Ver well zen, zere is no more to be said!'

'Why, Weatherhead, have *you* lost faith too, then?' said the Colonel.

I saw that it was no good—all I wanted now was to get out of it creditably and get rid of the Frenchman. 'I'm sorry to say,' I replied, 'that I'm afraid I've been deceived by the extraordinary likeness. I don't think, on reflection, that that *is* Bingo!'

'What do you think, Travers?' asked the Colonel.

'Well, since you ask me,' said Travers, with quite unnecessary dryness, 'I never did think so.'

'Nor I,' said the Colonel; 'I thought from the first that was never my Bingo. Why, Bingo would make two of that beast!'

And Lilian and her aunt both protested that they had had their doubts from the first.

'Zen you pairmeet zat I remove 'im?' said the Frenchman.

'Certainly,' said the Colonel; and after some apologies on our part for the mistake, he went off in triumph, with the detestable poodle frisking after him.

When he had gone the Colonel laid his hand kindly on my shoulder. 'Don't look so cut up about it, my boy,' he said; 'you did your best—there was a sort of likeness, to anyone who didn't know Bingo as we did.'

Just then the Frenchman again appeared at the hedge. 'A thousand pardons,' he said, 'bot I find zis upon my dog—it is not to me. Allow me to restore it viz many compliments.'

It was Bingo's collar. Travers took it from his hand and brought it to us.

'This was on the dog when you stopped that fellow, didn't you say?' he asked me.

One more lie—and I was so weary of falsehood! 'Y-yes,' I said reluctantly, 'that was so.'

'Very extraordinary,' said Travers; 'that's the wrong poodle beyond a doubt, but when he's found, he's wearing the right dog's collar! Now how do you account for that?'

'My good fellow,' I said impatiently, 'I'm not in the witness box. I can't account for it. It—it's a mere coincidence!'

'But look here, my *dear* Weatherhead,' argued Travers (whether in good faith or not I never could quite make out), 'don't you see what a tremendously important link it is? Here's a dog who (as I understand the facts) had a silver collar, with his name engraved on it, round his neck at the time he was lost. Here's that identical collar turning up soon afterwards round the neck of a totally different dog! We must follow this up; we must get at the bottom of it somehow! With a clue like this, we're sure to find out, either the dog himself, or what's become of him! Just try

to recollect exactly what happened, there's a good fellow. This is just the sort of thing I like!

It was the sort of thing I did not enjoy at all. 'You must excuse me to-night, Travers,' I said uncomfortably; 'you see, just now it's rather a sore subject for me—and I'm not feeling very well!' I was grateful just then for a reassuring glance of pity and confidence from Lilian's sweet eyes which revived my drooping spirits for the moment.

'Yes, we'll go into it to-morrow, Travers,' said the Colonel; 'and then—hullo, why, there's that confounded Frenchman *again*!'

It was indeed; he came prancing back delicately, with a malicious enjoyment on his wrinkled face. 'Once more I return to apologise,' he said. 'My poodle 'as 'ad ze grave indiscretion to make a very big 'ole at ze bottom of ze garden!'

I assured him that it was of no consequence. 'Perhaps,' he replied, looking steadily at me through his keen half-shut eyes, 'you vill not say zat ven you regard ze 'ole. And you others, I spik to you: somtimes von loses a somzing vich is qvite near all ze time. It is ver droll, eh? my vord, ha, ha, ha!' And he ambled off, with an aggressively fiendish laugh that chilled my blood.

'What the dooce did he mean by that, eh?' said the Colonel blankly.

'Don't know,' said Travers; 'suppose we go and inspect the hole?'

But before that I had contrived to draw near it myself, in deadly fear lest the Frenchman's last words had contained some innuendo which I had not understood.

It was light enough still for me to see something, at the unexpected horror of which I very nearly fainted.

That thrice accursed poodle which I had been insane enough to attempt to foist upon the Colonel must, it seems, have buried his supper the night before very near the spot in which I had laid Bingo, and his attempts to exhume his bone had brought the remains of my victim to the surface!

There the corpse lay, on the very top of the excavations. Time had not, of course, improved its appearance, which was ghastly in the extreme, but still plainly recognisable by the eye of affection.

'It's a very ordinary hole,' I gasped, putting myself before it and trying to turn them back. 'Nothing in it—nothing at all!'

‘Except one Algernon Weatherhead, Esq., eh?’ whispered Travers jocosely in my ear.

‘No, but,’ persisted the Colonel, advancing, ‘look here! Has the dog damaged any of your shrubs?’

‘No, no!’ I cried, piteously, ‘quite the reverse. Let’s all go indoors now; it’s getting so cold!’

‘See, there is a shrub or something uprooted!’ said the Colonel, still coming nearer that fatal hole. ‘Why, hullo, look there! What’s that?’

Lilian, who was by his side, gave a slight scream. ‘Uncle,’ she cried, ‘it looks like—like *Bingo*!’

The Colonel turned suddenly upon me. ‘Do you hear?’ he demanded, in a choked voice. ‘You hear what she says? Can’t you speak out? Is that our *Bingo*?’

I gave it up at last; I only longed to be allowed to crawl away under something! ‘Yes,’ I said in a dull whisper, as I sat down heavily on a garden seat, ‘yes . . . that’s *Bingo* . . . misfortune . . . shoot him . . . quite an accident!’

There was a terrible explosion after that; they saw at last how I had deceived them, and put the very worst construction upon everything. Even now I writhe impotently at times, and my cheeks smart and tingle with humiliation, as I recall that scene—the Colonel’s very plain speaking, Lilian’s passionate reproaches and contempt, and her aunt’s speechless prostration of disappointment.

I made no attempt to defend myself; I was not perhaps the complete villain they deemed me, but I felt dully that no doubt it all served me perfectly right.

Still I do not think I am under any obligation to put it all down in black and white here.

Travers had vanished at the first opportunity—whether out of delicacy, or the fear of breaking out into unseasonable mirth, I cannot say; and shortly afterwards the others came to where I sat silent with bowed head, and bade me a stern and final farewell.

And then, as the last gleam of Lilian’s white dress vanished down the garden path, I laid my head down on the table amongst the coffee-cups and cried like a beaten child.

* * * * *

I got leave as soon as I could and went abroad. The morning after my return I noticed, while shaving, that there was a small square marble tablet placed against the wall of the Colonel’s

garden. I got my opera-glass and read—and pleasant reading it was—the following inscription :—

IN AFFECTIONATE MEMORY
OF
B I N G O ,
SECRETLY AND CRUELLY PUT TO DEATH,
IN COLD BLOOD,
BY A
NEIGHBOUR AND FRIEND.
JUNE, 1881.

If this explanation of mine ever reaches my neighbours' eyes, I humbly hope they will have the humanity either to take away or tone down that tablet. They cannot conceive what I suffer, when curious visitors insist, as they do every day, in spelling out the words from our windows, and asking me countless questions about them !

Sometimes I meet the Curries about the village, and, as they pass me with averted heads, I feel myself growing crimson. Travers is almost always with Lilian now. He has given her a dog—a fox-terrier—and they take ostentatiously elaborate precautions to keep it out of my garden.

I should like to assure them here that they need not be under any alarm. I have shot one dog.

F. ANSTEY.

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For two years and a half I suffered much from sick headache, and seldom passed a week without one or more
attacks. Five months ago I commenced taking your Fruit Salt daily, and have not had one headache during that
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diet. One quality your medicine has above others of its kind is that it the patient does not become a slave.
and I am now finding myself able gradually to discontinue its use. I cannot thank you sufficiently for conferring
on me such a benefit, and if this letter can be used in any way I shall be really glad, merely begging that the
initials only of my name may be published.—I am, Sir, yours gratefully, THURTELL.

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'After suffering for nearly two and a half years
from severe headache and disordered stomach, and after
trying almost everything, and spending much money
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friend to try your Fruit Salt, and before I had finished
one bottle I found it doing me a great deal of good,
and now I am restored to my usual health; and others
I know that have tried it have not enjoyed such good
health for years.—Yours most truly,

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1882.

Thicker than Water.

BY JAMES PAYN, AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' 'HIGH SPIRITS,' &C.

CHAPTER V.

THE OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

IT seems to have escaped the notice of those social teachers who are so good as to point out to their fellow-creatures how to get on in the world, how great a factor in that matter, sometimes for good, more often for evil, is rapidity of action caused by the hatred of suspense. It is not exactly impatience, the 'raw haste' which the poet describes as 'half sister to delay,' but the desire to know the worst or the best. Though most frequently found in impulsive natures, it is not peculiar to them. One of the most methodical men of his time, and the most successful in his calling of all time, possessed this attribute in excess. On the one hand it caused him never to lose an opportunity: he 'caught the skirts of happy chance' throughout his life; but on the other he often renounced great gains in order to get a matter settled and off his mind.

Mrs. Beckett, notwithstanding her boasted experience of life, had never learnt to be patient; she had always acted more or less upon impulse, and her vast wealth had increased this tendency. Royal personages do not write when they have a fancy for anything; they telegraph for it, or send a special messenger. We read of Louis XIV., that on one occasion 'he had almost to wait,' but the catastrophe itself was averted.

No sooner had her two visitors departed, than the widow was consumed with a desire to despatch that letter to the younger of them of which she had spoken to him. 'In the meantime I will write to you,' she had said, not because she had found speaking difficult, but the getting an answer from him. She felt that he had stood on his guard and parried her thrusts, without absolutely becoming her antagonist. He had been very careful not to hurt her feelings, whereas if he had quite made up his mind to reject her advances, he might have repelled them with a word or two, such as she could have scarcely blamed him for using in self-defence. It was plain to her that he was in a state of indecision: on the one hand well disposed for a life of ease and opulence; on the other, sensitive to the ridicule that would attach to him for the price he would have to pay for it. She did not dream of having a rival in her affections; she had never heard a whisper of such a thing; that view of the case did not occur to her at all, perhaps because she was secretly conscious that affection—on his side at least—was not much concerned in the matter. She knew that Edgar liked her, and persuaded herself that his liking, when he came to know the sacrifices she was prepared to make for him, would turn to love. But in the meantime she could hardly write of the sacrifices; she could not say, 'If you marry me I will settle this and that upon you absolutely, and make you entirely independent of me.' She was secretly conscious that he had exaggerated his tendency to extravagance and his dislike to all financial control, in order to dissuade her from her purpose; but she ignored it. Her Edgar, if he would be hers, should be as extravagant as he pleased, and have nothing to complain of in the way of restriction. She had fallen over head and ears in love with him.

There was certainly some disparity in their ages, and that on the wrong side; but Edgar looked old for his years while she looked young, and, what was more, felt so. She had had troubles, severe ones, but they had not broken her spirit; her capacity for affection was as great as ever. In her first marriage she had not looked for love; in her second she had looked in vain for it. It was still, as it were, owed to her, and there was yet time to enjoy it; and even if it were not thoroughly reciprocated, might not her third union be as happy as her first, where reciprocity had also been wanting, though in that case, from her own side? At the worst she was convinced, and not without reason, that Edgar Dornay would never treat her ill. For her friends she had arguments enough

for taking this step. With her enormous fortune she felt the need of a protector and adviser, &c.; she knew their remonstrances would not be very strong; and as for her enemies, she could afford to defy or to despise them. But the unfolding of her intentions to Edgar himself was a very different matter. Even the simple 'yes' or 'no' required from the blushing maiden whose hand has been asked in marriage, is said to be an embarrassing affair. Conceive then what a task lay before the widow, who was herself about to put the question instead of answering it! And she had not even the excuse of a leap-year. It was easy enough to begin 'My dear Edgar,' and to end 'Yours faithfully, Kate Beckett;' the difficulty lay in the intermediate matter.

A snow-storm of torn-up letters went on in the widow's boudoir before she could compose one to her mind; if it was not a pretty letter after all, that may be set down to the necessity of the case; under the circumstances it was perhaps as good a one as could have been written.

'My dear Edgar,—If we had not been interrupted this morning, I had made up my mind to speak to you upon a certain subject about which—for suspense in this matter is intolerable to me—I am now compelled to write. It is a subject so very delicate and difficult for me to touch upon, that I should not venture to do so but for the confidence I feel that I am not only addressing a man of honour, who will respect my secret, but a man of feeling, who will understand what it costs me to reveal it.'

The above sentence was not composed in a hurry. Even when it was written she was dissatisfied with it. She thought the expression 'costs' might remind him inopportunately of her money. 'It is not usual for ladies to write to gentlemen upon such a topic; my very housemaid would hesitate to give to the young man with whom she "keeps company" that fateful ring (with O. K. K. B. W. P. on it), which she accepts from him with such alacrity; it is a woman's province to wait for her wooer. Unhappily I do not share the common lot. My position is an exceptional one. If I am so fortunate as to have won the affections of an honourable man, certain considerations would seal his lips; and the more worthy he is of being beloved the more closely they would seal them. Ever since I have known you, Edgar, I have been a happier woman' (perhaps it was fortunate that their acquaintance had not been a prolonged one; it would have been *mal à propos* under the circumstances to remind him that she had known him from his child-

hood). 'Your companionship has cheered me; your intelligence has delighted my mind; and above all your heart, or so I have flattered myself, has beaten responsively to mine. Your behaviour of late, and especially to-day, leads me to believe that a mistaken sense of independence may have kept you silent upon a matter in which your happiness may be, as mine most certainly is, concerned. The inequality of our fortunes may, to one of your sensitive nature, have put a padlock on your tongue. That is foolish, Edgar, for there is an inequality of age between us—ten years or more, I fear' (it was nearer twenty)—'which if this matter were one of bargain, which Heaven forbid, might fairly be written off against it. If a false pride, or an unfounded mistrust, prevents your speaking to me of what is in your heart, I entreat you for both our sakes to discard them. If, on the other hand, I have deceived myself, it is better that I should be undeceived. Your generous heart will forgive a fond and foolish woman who has mistaken regard for love, and a natural kindliness of heart for a particular inclination.

'Yours faithfully,

'KATE BECKETT.'

Then came the postscript, which, though it would be cynical to say it contained the pith of the matter, was of considerable importance. 'Whatever may be your reply to this, I trust you will accept the inclosed; if not as an earnest of the many offices of loving-kindness I hope to do for you, then as a small testimony of what at all events will be a lifelong friendship. I will only add that instead of being five hundred I wish it were five thousand.'

Having concluded this remarkable composition, it seemed to the writer that every moment it lay on her table or even in the post-office was lost time; the possibility of the Sunday intervening before Edgar could hear from her was a terrible thought; so she sent the note by hand.

'Any answer, me lady?' inquired the tall footman to whom its custody was entrusted.

That she expected an answer we may well imagine, and it was not without an inward struggle that she replied, 'No; you need only leave the letter;' she would in truth have liked the man to have waited in the hall of the Aglaia Club for her correspondent's reply.

When the letter had gone she half regretted not having added another postscript, 'Please acknowledge cheque;' not that she was solicitous about its safety, but that it would have necessitated an

immediate response. Nor was this wholly owing to impatience of suspense. If she did not know quite as much about Mr. Edgar Dornay as she thought she did, she was well aware that he was a man of impulse, and that her best chance of carrying his somewhat slackly defended heart was by a *coup de main*.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO TO ONE.

THE withdrawal of Mrs. Beckett to her boudoir was a matter of some surprise to Miss Marvon, for it was not the custom of the elder lady thus to seclude herself. She did not much care for general society, of which she had seen enough and to spare, but she liked companionship, and especially that of her young friend. It seemed, therefore, incumbent on her to offer some sort of explanation for her late seclusion.

‘I have been writing some letters, my dear,’ she said; which was true enough if twenty copies of one letter constitute a plural.

‘Could I not have helped you, dear Mrs. Beckett?’

‘Well, no; I don’t think you could, my dear.’

There was a tinge of red in the widow’s cheek as she said so, and also a faint smile on her lip, for she was not without some sense of humour. ‘Would it be indiscreet to inquire what you and Mr. Ralph were talking about all that time in the conservatory?’

It was Mary’s turn to blush now.

‘Well, among other things, he was eloquent upon the language of flowers.’

‘Indeed,’ said the widow, smiling. ‘I must take more care of you, Mary. I had no idea that you had made an impression in that quarter.’

‘Nor I,’ answered the other drily.

‘I am glad you do not take his attentions very seriously, for I am afraid Mr. Ralph is rather a butterfly. However, no one can deny that he is very agreeable, though he always rather reminds me of the poet of whom it was said that he could write lines to a broomstick. He is so very enthusiastic about everything, and at the shortest possible notice.’

Mary, who had been always careful to evince no personal hostility to Uncle Ralph for the very reason she had given to him, was now more chary of her censure than ever. She only smiled adhesion to her companion's sentiments.

'How Charley hates him!' continued the widow. 'It is such a pity.'

'It is a pity, at all events, that he shows it so,' observed Mary.

'No doubt. A young man who has his way to make in the world should not make himself enemies.'

'Still, Mr. Ralph Dornay tried to snub him.'

'True. And, as you say, "tried" without altogether succeeding in it. Charley has a cool, quiet way with him, which I have often reprov'd, but which I confess not a little tickles me. In a Minister of State it would be admirable, but in a young Government clerk it is very impertinent. What an immense difference social position makes! Supposing a young man—I don't say Charley, but one like Charley——'

'Upon my word, dear Mrs. Beckett,' interrupted Mary, laughing, 'I don't believe there is one.'

'I am glad to hear you say so, my dear,' said the widow significantly.

'Oh, I didn't mean anything so very much in his favour,' answered Mary quietly; 'we were talking of his cool ways. But I am interrupting you; you were supposing a young man.'

'Yes; suppose a young man, I was about to say, equal to Charley in intelligence, though in another line, who should suddenly exchange a moderate position for one of great wealth, what a splendid future would lie before him!'

Mary gave a little shrug of her shoulders.

'That depends, my dear Mrs. Beckett. Of course, as you have just said, his liveliness would pass for wit, and his talents for genius; but the motive for exerting himself would be taken from him. Being in the lap of luxury, there is a temptation to sit there, and take what the gods provide one in a golden spoon.'

'Yet it would surely be a spur to his ambition to feel that with the advantages he has become possessed of almost anything would be within his grasp. In a man of moderate means, however able, the sense of the impossibility of success crushes endeavour. In a general way, you know, I am rather a sentimental person, but, for the reason I have just given, I do not think that clever young men should marry penniless girls.'

'Perhaps not,' said Mary gravely. 'You presume, however, that the alternative is given them of marrying for money.'

'Let us say marrying money. Why should we say "for" money because a man marries a woman who happens to possess it? Of course there must be the alternative. If Charley, for instance, had had any chance of winning an heiress, I am not sure, my dear, notwithstanding my high opinion of you, that I should have recommended him to your attention.'

'Then I wish he had had the chance,' said Mary, smiling. She could speak lightly enough of Charley; but some one else had been brought to her mind by her companion's words, of whom she could not so speak. The thoughts of both ladies, without any mutual consciousness of the fact, had been dwelling on the same man. The case Mrs. Beckett had been supposing was that of Edgar Dornay; and it had suggested to Mary whether her encouragement of that young man's attentions might not be an act of selfishness which would smother an honourable ambition, and cut him off from possibilities of greatness. It was a very delicate scruple, for, beyond the recommendation of a change of colour in the decoration of Mrs. Beckett's boudoir, Mr. Edgar Dornay had at present effected no particular intellectual revolution, nor, indeed, accomplished anything which the world would not have willingly let die.

'I never denied that Charley had his faults, my dear,' continued Mrs. Beckett, forgetting her rôle as advocate of Charley's cause, and only using him as a perch from which to fly to the subject which was monopolising her mind; 'his prejudices, for example, are often as strong as they are groundless. I don't believe, for example, he likes Edgar himself one bit better than he likes his uncle.'

'I don't think he quite understands his character,' observed Mary, with a show of indifference.

'He doesn't give himself the trouble to study it,' said the widow vehemently.

'It's a great pity,' observed Mary gently.

'I call it abominable of him,' continued the widow. 'The way in which he jumped from his seat when our other visitors entered the room to-day, and murmured something about "another engagement," was too transparently indecent. One would have thought they had had the small-pox out upon them.'

'They did interrupt his story, however,' said Mary apologetically. Her sympathies were always 'retained for the defence,' and,

moreover, she was anxious to turn the conversation from its present topic. She loved to think about Edgar Dornay—indeed, she thought about him whether she would or no—quite as much as her companion, but, unlike her, she was averse to speak about him. ‘I confess I was very much interested about the giant at Letcombe Dottrel. What a curious person Mr. Paton must be!’

‘Curious is no word for him, my dear. He is as mad about some things as a March hare; only being so very rich he is only considered eccentric.’

‘But I have always heard he was very benevolent.’

‘Well, yes; except in one particular direction. In that respect he is like Howard the philanthropist, who liked everybody except his own flesh and blood.’

‘Why, I understood Mr. Paton had no relations!’

‘Nor has he any near ones. But he once had an only son. “A little more than kin, and less than kind,” should be the family motto, for they two hated one another like poison.’

‘How shocking!’

‘It was indeed; I don’t know who was to blame for it in the first instance; but the breach grew wider and wider, till there was no bridging it over. At last the son ran away with a young woman very inferior to him in social station—the village organist—which caused a dreadful scandal.’

‘That is the sort of marriage which the world is slowest to forgive,’ sighed Mary, thoughtfully. ‘I suppose the world is right, but it seems very hard.’

‘In this case its forgiveness was not required,’ observed the widow, drily, ‘for they were never married at all. For all that, however, young Henry Paton stuck to the girl in a certain fashion—not that he could have really loved her, for he ill-treated her, and, in the end, deserted her; but he would never marry anyone else. He declined to form an alliance which would have been at least respectable, and on which his father insisted as the basis of their reconciliation. And, last of all, he crowned his enormities (for I assure you they were not mere peccadilloes) by trying to put his father into a lunatic asylum, which he very nearly accomplished.’

‘What a terrible history!’ exclaimed the girl. ‘And is the young man dead?’

‘Yes. He was killed in some drunken brawl in New York, and mourned by no one except by his poor mother.’

‘She is alive, then?’

‘Yes; and as good a woman as ever breathed. Mr. Paton, too, to do him justice, is the kindest of husbands; but he has forbidden her ever to mention her son’s name to him. What was at first mere heat against him, in the end turned to hate, so that his very memory is loathsome to him. What is stranger than all, this vehemence of detestation has affected the old man’s general views of life. Naturally of a most tender and sympathising disposition, he will never admit the tie of blood as a motive for affection. He looks upon relations as humourists depict mothers-in-law, while, on the other hand, his great house is full of living objects of benevolence, not always chosen with good judgment. Charley called them, if you remember, “the Happy Family”—poets, painters, inventors, and all the intellectual tagrag and bobtail who are always on the look-out for money and a patron.’

‘How very curious! And do you know this Mr. Paton?’

‘A little. He had some acquaintance at one time’—here the widow pressed her lips together—‘with my second husband. Mr. Rennie has been his man of business for years, and your friend, Mrs. Sotheran, of course, is very intimate at Letcombe Hall, since she lives in the same parish.’

‘And yet she has never mentioned to me one word about Mr. Paton,’ said Mary; ‘I have only heard of him from others.’

‘How curious!—Thanks.’ This to the servant, who had just placed a letter in his mistress’s hand. A glance at the address was sufficient to tell her from whom it came. It was the one she had been expecting with such impatience, but she had certainly no right to complain upon the score of delay. It was not yet dinner time, and her own letter had not been despatched more than two hours. She argued favourably (from what she knew of Edgar’s character) from this prompt reply. At all events, she held in her hand the key of her future happiness, or, let us say, discontent, for misery would certainly be too strong a word.

The moment was a supreme one, but then she was not unaccustomed to such supreme moments. Moreover, as we get on in years, all moments (save that in which death is beckoning to some dear one, true and tried) become less supreme. There was a ‘catch’ in her breath, but her face showed nothing of the anxiety that consumed her. If it had done so, however, her companion would not have observed it. Her thoughts, attracted for the moment by the sad domestic history to which she had just been listening, had already reverted to more personal affairs—

not exactly her own affairs, though her own were bound up in them. Mary Marvon used a very rare—though, among women, a not unexampled—system of notation. With her Number One was not always first, and was sometimes nought. She had every reason to believe, short of an actual offer of marriage, that Edgar Dornay purposed to make her his wife. She had liked him—even, perhaps, what is called fallen in love with him—from the first, but she had kept that fact carefully locked up in her own heart. She had given him no sort of encouragement, but had behaved to him exactly as she behaved to Mrs. Beckett's other visitors; not, indeed, with the humility often used by persons in her position, for nature had not fitted her for the conventional rôle of a 'companion,' but certainly with no forward assurance. On the contrary, she had put a constraint upon herself when in his company, and replied to him whenever he had addressed her with studied reticence. He had pushed aside this veil with his own hands, had sought her out, though with no demonstration of manner, in her modest retirement, and had won her heart.

He was not, however, quite sure that he had won it, nor had she quite made up her mind to give it him. Her hesitation arose solely upon his own account. In one point of view—the most common one—she was without doubt a bad match for him. She could give him nothing but her love. Nay, as Mrs. Beckett had just been unconsciously pointing out, she might be not even a *plus* at all, but a *minus*. His union with her might take away from him certain opportunities. They did not present themselves to her in the precise form that they had appeared to her friend; she could not picture the man of her choice marrying for money, but she could understand that her poverty might be a check upon his advancement in life. His parents were dead, and he had no one but his own wishes to consult in the matter—unless Uncle Ralph might be considered in a paternal light, an idea which she rejected with some contempt. But this very freedom of choice increased her hesitation. It behoved her all the more not to take advantage of this uncontrolled attachment to his own hurt. What the world might say of it would be a very small thing to her in comparison with what her own conscience might say. It did not enter into her consideration at all—what Mrs. Beckett, on the other hand, saw very clearly—that Edgar Dornay was of that impulsive and indecisive nature which needs, above all others, alliance with a firm, unwavering one; that a wife such as Mary Marvon would, in fact, to a young gentleman of his incompleteness be 'the making

of him.' But, in spite of all her doubts, she had a secret conviction in her true heart that she could make him a happy man.

She was not so absolutely ignorant of human nature as to suppose this sort of love was reciprocated, but she believed that Edgar loved her as truly and unselfishly as man could do. It was most fortunate for her hostess that Mary was thus sunk in reflection, for with Edgar Dornay's letter in her hand Mrs. Beckett felt very unequal to conversation. If her young friend had looked up at that critical moment with the very natural observation, for example, 'Who is your correspondent?' one can hardly imagine what would have happened, though it is just possible, I fear, that she might have replied, 'Only a bill, dear,' with the most innocent smile in the world.

Before conversation was resumed, however, the dressing gong began to boom through the house, which afforded her an excuse for retreat with all the honours of truth.

CHAPTER VII.

A FOOL'S PARADISE.

EVEN in the seclusion of her own apartment the widow did not tear open her Edgar's letter and greedily devour it with her eyes; nor, as a matter of fact perhaps, is that course of action the usual one in such cases except upon the stage, where one has to consider the conditions of distance—the gallery. In real life such treatment is only applied to telegrams. When a woman, especially, has a *billet-doux* in her hand, or what she hopes will prove one, she is in no hurry, however impatient may be her natural disposition, to become possessed of its contents; and this is more particularly the case when she has good reason to believe them to be agreeable.

That the cheque had not come back Mrs. Beckett had assured herself by the ordeal of touch; her delicate fingers had weighed the missive and decided that it was too light to contain an inclosure. If her Edgar had kept the cheque she felt that he was secured to her, or, as brutal MAN would have expressed it, 'sold;' for, though she had urged his acceptance of it in any case, she knew that there was in reality no alternative for him.

As she gazed on his handwriting her thoughts reverted to the

day, now thirty years ago, when her father had placed a similar letter in her hand with the quiet remark, 'This is from Sir Robert, my darling; you will do as you please about it.'

How different were her present feelings! It seemed to her as she compared her 'now' and 'then' that she could scarcely be the same woman. Her second offer had been made by word of mouth, and how differently again had that proposal been received! With what rapture had she heard it! With what promise it had seemed to blossom, and how, alas, that blossom had withered ere it ever grew to bud! She could not conceal from herself that there was no such blossom now; yet if there was less to win—and there *was* less, much less—she on her part had less to lose.

'My dear Mrs. Beckett,—Your kind letter has affected me beyond measure. I feel I am not worthy of your love, but I hope to become worthy of it. I am compelled to spend to-morrow at Brighton, but I shall be with you at three o'clock on Monday, when I shall trust to find you alone.

'Ever yours affectionately,

'EDGAR DORNAY.'

'N.B.—Cheque received.'

If the letter was not all that the widow could wish, it was without doubt an acceptance of her proposal; if it did not fulfil her expectations, it removed from her all apprehensions of disappointment; nay, it realised her hopes: but she didn't like his putting off his visit till Monday. Why should he not have come on Sunday? Even supposing he had a previous engagement for that day, why should he not have cancelled it? Was he not engaged to *her*? The notion of Mr. Edgar Dornay's having any conscientious scruples concerning Sunday did not, I regret to say, enter into her mind. What however she resented a great deal more was Edgar's postscript, 'Cheque received,' which seemed almost to have a double signification for her. Her first act, indeed, was to produce a pair of golden scissors—one of a set of implements fitted into a sea shell, such as Aphrodite might have used at a marine Dorcas Society—and cut that neatly out. The note looked a little shorter, but much sweeter, without that little addition.

Mrs. Beckett had not only overlived her illusions, but had, what very few women possess, a due sense of proportion. She acknowledged to herself that concerning the matter between herself and 'another'—so her dividends expressed it—she had got decidedly the best of it. If Mr. Charles Sotheran, whom to do

her justice she would have no more thought of as a husband than of marrying her grandson, had been in the place of Mr. Edgar Dornay, she would have taken a different view of the affair; the obligation would, in that case, have seemed to lie on the other side. His circumstances were such that, to use a homely but very significant expression, he might well have 'jumped at' such an offer. But Edgar Dornay was well born, in possession of moderate means, and had made for himself a certain position in the world. She was not only very pleased that he had accepted her proposal, but grateful. It was impossible for him of course to speak of 'terms,' but she at once resolved that they should be made as much to his liking as possible. Her first idea—the idea of a woman in love, but one which fitted also with the natural generosity of her disposition—was to make him independent of her. And it was not enough for her to tell him her intentions; she wished to be able to assure him that they were already in process of being carried out. This was a notion that would never of course have entered into the head of a young girl; but in her case it had a certain pathos in it—it was a tacit confession that she knew she was not loved for herself alone. If the other reason for which he loved her should be strengthened, would he not then love her more? There was at least nothing sordid in such an act of voluntary munificence.

She dashed off three lines to her man of business, Mr. Rennie, to request his attendance on her after breakfast on Monday morning: 'Come to breakfast if you can,' she added impulsively, 'though I am afraid our hour (9.30) will be a little late for you.' Then she went down to dinner in the highest spirits.

There are some unphilosophic persons who do not much believe in the chastening influence of adversity; who confess that they are never so unsympathetic as when they are in low spirits, and that melancholy and moroseness are with them synonymous terms. We admire their candour, but pity the littleness of their minds. Still, it must be acknowledged that when folks are in good luck they are more agreeable as companions than when they are depressed; kindly natures expand under the influence of good fortune, and are very willing that their fellow-creatures should share, or at all events receive, the overplus of it. Mrs. Beckett had been always kind to her young companion, but never had she borne herself so warmly towards her as on the present occasion; in the familiarity of their conversation when they had gone up to the drawing-room she even ventured once more to hint at the subject

of Mary's settling in life, though without any direct reference to the husband she had chosen for her.

'You are very young still, my dear, it is quite true; but age is relative; to a girl of fortune it is of small consequence, but, to one with small means, every year after she becomes marriageable is twelve months lost.'

'I have never heard the value of time pointed out with such particularity,' said Mary smiling.

'My dear, I am quite serious; it is the fact,' returned the widow earnestly, 'and I need not tell you, Mary, that whomsoever you may choose for a husband—though you know my especial wishes in that matter—I shall take care that you do not go to him without a dowry.'

'You are very good and very kind,' said Mary, with a faint flush; she was used to hints of the widow's intentions towards her which had at first made her very uncomfortable; there was something in her nature which revolted against them, though she had found from experience that it was better to pass them lightly by. 'But unless, my dear Mrs. Beckett, your generosity partakes of the nature of what Mr. Rennie was trying to explain to us the other day, a time bargain, or that you want to get rid of me as soon as possible——'

'Nay, nay,' interrupted the widow, 'you know I don't mean that.' She was conscious, however—under the new conditions of her life that was to be—of having contemplated Mary's departure as a possibility. No idea of jealousy had crossed her mind, but it had occurred to her that when she became Mrs. Dornay, not only would Mary's office become a sinecure, but that there would be something embarrassing in her presence. In the case of turtle doves, however roomy their nest may be, the happy pair, or the female at all events, prefers it to be free from lodgers. 'My house will always be your home, Mary, but circumstances may alter as regards myself—I may not be in a position—nobody knows what may happen.'

The widow was in a quagmire, in which her struggles to escape only sank her the deeper; she felt she had gone too far in hinting at any alteration in her mode of life, and she did not know how to erase the impression her words might have conveyed.

Mary, however, was quite innocent of all suspicion. She thought Mrs. Beckett was referring to the uncertainties of human life. 'It will be long indeed, I hope, and have every reason to believe,' she answered earnestly, 'before I have to come to any resolution on that account.'

The widow bit her lip and was silent. It was possible, had Mary given her any encouragement, that she might have made a confidante of her then and there; but under present circumstances that was out of the question. It was certainly very unpleasant that the idea of change in her condition had only associated itself in Mary's mind with her decease. She would take care to let Mr. Rennie understand that she had sent for him with quite other views than to give him her testamentary instructions.

'I know you hate to perform in public, Mary,' she said with some abruptness (it was the one thing in Mrs. Beckett's manner which now and then betrayed the relative positions occupied by Miss Marvon and herself), 'but since we are quite alone, perhaps you will play something on the piano.'

It was an elastic request, and Mary took full advantage of it, for music was her delight. She played piece after piece, now grave, now gay, and at the end of each the widow murmured, 'That is indeed a treat,' or 'Thank you,' or 'How charming!' But what was played was in fact only the accompaniment, more or less suitable, to her own thoughts.

When Mary's fingers evoked pathos, Mrs. Beckett's mind reverted to her girlhood, so long past and gone; to the simple pleasures of her youth, and to its dreams; which, though great things had befallen her, had been far indeed from being realised. When the strain grew sombre her middle life passed once more before her, haunted by the ghost of love, and shadowed by a hated presence. When the tune was bright and joyous, she painted her future in bright colours, and likened the remainder of her days to an Indian summer. But as to whether Beethoven was being played, or Mozart, or Chopin, the widow neither knew nor cared, so long as the notes were not so loud as to interfere with her own reflections. And so it is with a good many other people who affect to 'doat on music.'

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. RENNIE'S INSTRUCTIONS.

THE next day was Sunday, a *dies non*; the day of all days—since in well-regulated establishments no work is permitted—on which suspense is intolerable. Again and again did Mrs. Beckett congratulate herself that she had taken time by the forelock, and

secured her Edgar's reply. How dreadful it would have been to have pictured him to herself at Brighton, ignorant of her devotion to him, and—it was really within the bounds of possibility—flirting with somebody else! Even as it was, the day was a very long one, and contrary to her custom she went twice to church, not so much, however, with the idea of special thanksgiving as of withdrawing her mind from its monopolising topic. The preacher was eloquent and fashionable, but it is doubtful whether he succeeded in producing in her that description of meditation which, above all others, should be 'fancy free.'

Contrary to the widow's expectations, Mr. Rennie arrived at the breakfast hour on Monday morning. The lawyer was a man of slight, almost insignificant figure, young for his years, which were verging on sixty; but with an astute and intelligent face. His eyes, blue and keen as a sword blade, like it were kept in scabbard until there was need for them. Their lids were usually pressed so close together that it was a wonder he saw out of them. The habit was ascribed to near-sightedness, an idea which he was very far from wishing to combat. The peculiarity had arisen perhaps in trick, but he had found it useful to him. When he heard things from his clients (and he sometimes did) which would have opened ordinary eyes very wide indeed, they only lifted his lashes a little. Nothing seemed to astonish him. On the other hand, he sometimes astonished others; on occasions which demanded their exhibition, some folks knew that he could open his eyes to some purpose, when their effect was that of a policeman's bull's-eyes suddenly turned on a detected thief. Mr. Rennie was an old bachelor, and his manners were of the old school of politeness: his behaviour to women, always kindly but mingled with a certain respect, was quite different from the affected devotion displayed to them by men of fashion; his ways with men were various, but he had a general reputation for something more than mere scrupulous integrity; a man of honour first and a lawyer afterwards. His business was mainly confined to the affairs of great families, and the administration of large estates; but he had been known to give valuable advice to persons of comparative insignificance, and, what was more, in a very unprofessional manner—without a fee. Mrs. Beckett adored him, and told him so; just a little to his alarm. A woman who had buried two husbands was, he thought, capable of reverting to first principles in the way of matrimony, and of capturing the third by force. But on the whole he liked her; and not least for her

treatment of Mary Marvon. He had seen a great deal of the dependants of the great, and they did not impress him favourably; but in this young lady he recognised modesty without subservience, and an unflinching self-respect.

'This is a compliment indeed, Mr. Rennie,' were the widow's first words of welcome. 'I never thought you would come to breakfast.'

'It is almost as dangerous to give an invitation, madam, under the impression that it will not be accepted,' was his reply, 'as to back a bill under the contrary impression. You seem to have made every preparation, however, for my entertainment.'

'There are some cutlets and fish; oh, I see what you mean; why of course there is Mary.' The lawyer was shaking hands with her with something more than his usual politeness. 'I knew you would never dare to take breakfast with me alone. Under pretence of being my chaperon, or sheep dog, everyone knows that Mary is here for the protection of the public.'

'*Quis custodiet?*' murmured the lawyer, with a glance of pity towards the orphan girl.

'What do you say, sir?' inquired the widow sharply. 'I always suspect the dead languages.'

'I was merely quoting a legal phrase, my dear madam, with reference to the custody of infants. By the bye, I have been having some correspondence with our friend Mr. Paton that would surprise you. What do you think of an infant nine feet high?'

'The giant! Oh, we've heard of him!' exclaimed Mary, laughing.

'Well, he's a minor, and since it was through Mr. Paton's advice that he threw up his engagement, my client thinks he is responsible for his future. As he shakes the pillars of domestic peace at the Hall—and, indeed, the Hall too—it has become necessary to place him somewhere else, and I have been offering premiums to proprietors of travelling shows to take him. Never was a respectable family solicitor placed in such a false position.'

'The mention of Mr. Rennie's profession, Mary,' observed the widow, 'which nobody, I am sure, would ever guess, unless he referred to it——'

'Now, do you really expect me to take that as a compliment, Mrs. Beckett?' interposed the lawyer.

'The mention of his profession,' continued the widow, 'reminds me that he has come here professionally, and that I must

deny myself the pleasure of your company this morning ; but you can have the carriage, of course, as usual.'

'Thank you, dear Mrs. Beckett, but I had much rather walk.'

'Then take Simmons with you, I beg, my dear : you are much too young and pretty to go without a maid.'

'I would much prefer Alexander,' said Mary.

'Now did you ever know such a girl, Mr. Rennie ?' exclaimed the widow appealingly. 'She prefers walking to driving, and the company of Alexander to that of Simmons.'

'It depends upon who Alexander is,' observed the lawyer judicially. 'If he's an attractive young man——'

'It is a dog, my dear sir ; it's Mr. Beckett's old St. Bernard.'

'Oh, indeed ! One of those animals who go about with a bottle of Chartreuse—no, by the bye, that's the other monastery—of brandy round their necks, and save people in the snow. In winter a most admirable companion, but in summer I should have thought——'

'He is charming at all times,' laughed Mary, rising from her seat ; 'I've not had a walk with him for weeks, so that we shall have lots to say to one another.'

And with a pretty curtsy and a pleasant smile she left the seniors to their conversation.

'That's a good girl, I'm sure,' observed the lawyer, when the young lady had left the room.

'An excellent girl,' assented Mrs. Beckett warmly ; 'she is quite like a younger sister to me.'

'Without the little jealousies and antagonisms which relations sometimes give rise to, eh ?' observed Mr. Rennie slyly.

'Upon my word, you're as bad as Mr. Paton,' exclaimed the widow. 'I suppose that is why you lawyers get such a bad character : you mix with such queer clients and catch their complaints.'

'Yes, that's it. We go about doing good at all risks.'

'Well, I want you to do some good to-day, or rather to put me, as your client, in the way of doing it. I particularly wish to benefit a certain person—who shall remain nameless, if you please, for the present—pecuniarily. I wish that person, though closely connected with me, to be made independent of me, no matter what may happen as regards change of circumstances, or even of feeling in myself.'

'A very generous proposition,' observed the lawyer, stirring his tea, and thinking to himself, 'Now she is going to provide for

that young girl. A very good thing too. Companionship is no inheritance, and one woman's affection for another is never to be depended on: though it looks as firm as the solid earth, there is always a possibility of a landslip.'

As Mrs. Beckett remained silent, he looked up at her through his screwed-up eyes and nodded encouragement. The widow was blushing, and pursuing a peach stone across her plate with a trembling finger—a sign of embarrassment which by no means astonished the lawyer. People, in his experience, were generally more ashamed of their benevolent intentions, especially if they were of a Quixotic character, than of their revenges.

'A highly landable idea,' he continued, 'if one is only assured, which, no doubt, you are in this case, of the worthiness of the individual to be benefited.'

'I have every confidence in the person in question, Mr. Rennie. Perhaps, without beating about the bush, it may be as well to state to you, of course in the strictest confidence, that the person I have in my mind is my future husband.'

For the moment Mr. Rennie forgot his office and even himself. He opened his eyes to their fullest extent, not in reproof, as usual, but in sheer amazement.

'Alexander has gone out with Miss Marvon,' said the widow severely.

'Alexander, my dear madam?' stammered the other.

'Yes—the dog. I thought you whistled, sir.' And, indeed, it was true that the least ghost of a whistle had somehow escaped from the old lawyer's lips.

'Good heavens, madam! nothing was further from my thoughts. It is no whistling matter.'

'So I should hope,' returned the widow implacably; she was very much offended.

'Thank heavens, it isn't me; that's one comfort,' was the lawyer's reflection, which assisted him in summoning a gentle smile.

'If I have exhibited any amazement, my dear Mrs. Beckett,' he said, 'it was from the consideration of your great courage and confidence in human nature.'

'I think I am old enough to know my own mind, Mr. Rennie.'

'I don't know as to that. A woman, they say, is as old as she looks, in which case I must needs doubt your judgment.'

'I am glad you have something civil to say at last.'

‘Civil! My dear Mrs. Beckett, you must be well aware that my feelings towards you are not those of a mere acquaintance, or even such as should exist between lawyer and client.’

‘You would not have dared to say that ten minutes ago,’ smiled the widow, who had by this time recovered, not only her self-possession, but her good humour; from which it may be gathered that she was not absolutely impervious to flattery.

‘Well, I dare to say it now; and something more. On one occasion, when I had had the opportunity of being of service to you, you were graciously pleased to call me your guardian.’

‘I went further, and said “guardian angel,” put in Mrs. Beckett frankly, but with a tinge of colour. He was referring to a certain time when his advice had restrained her from placing what would have been a most ill-judged confidence in her late husband.

‘As your friend and well-wisher, at all events,’ pursued the lawyer modestly, ‘it is my duty now to point out to you that your position is a very exceptional one. The gentleman you have in your mind you will make not only your husband, but a prince consort.’

‘And how do you know that he is not a prince already?’ inquired the widow, smiling.

The question was a little embarrassing, for the man Mr. Rennie had in his mind was certainly not a prince, nor at all like one, being in fact no other than Mr. Ralph Dornay. He knew that he was intimate at the house, and thought him just the sort of calculating humbug to have learnt the length of Mrs. Beckett’s foot.

‘If he had been a prince I think you would have called him a personage and not a person,’ returned the lawyer dexterously.

‘He is a prince to me,’ said the widow gently; ‘to us women all men seem so while they are our lovers.’

‘I suppose they do,’ observed the lawyer drily. He was considering whether, even to his betrothed, Mr. Ralph Dornay could appear to possess any princely attributes.

‘This is a matter, Mr. Rennie,’ continued the widow, stung by his cynical tone, ‘in which I have no need of advice, except professionally. My mind is quite made up as to the main question.’

The lawyer bowed, and took a pinch of snuff; it was the only vice of which he had ever been accused—or at least convicted.

‘I am here, my dear madam, to obey your instructions. You

wish, as I understand, that this fortunate gentleman should enjoy a handsome life interest in your estate.'

'That is of course. It is the usual arrangement, is it not?'

'It is a common one, but by no means without exception. In such a case as yours, a woman's fortune is settled upon her and her children, but, if she wishes it, a sufficient income is reserved to her husband should he survive her.'

'Well, you can draw up the settlement; but I wish a certain sum to be given absolutely to my husband on the day of our marriage; fifty thousand pounds.'

'My dear Mrs. Beckett!'

'Such are my wishes; be so good as to embody them in—I don't know how to express myself technically—but I know what I want to have done.'

Mr. Rennie smiled as though he had no doubt of that.

'I suppose as regards the lump sum a deed of gift will be necessary?' continued the widow.

'Not at all. There will be certain preliminary arrangements, and then you have only to sign a cheque.'

The widow's eyes sparkled with pleasure. To place a cheque for 50,000*l.* in the hands of her intended would be, she felt, an enormous pleasure to her.

'A draft of your instructions shall be prepared for your approval,' resumed the lawyer, who had no intention of precipitating matters. 'Is there anything—or anyone else—you wish to mention?'

Since cheques for 50,000*l.* were flying about, it struck the kind-hearted lawyer that Mary Marvon might well be brought to his client's remembrance before Mr. Ralph Dornay came into his kingdom, after which her chance would be small indeed.

'No,' said the widow thoughtfully. 'Nothing else occurs to me. You will not be long about it, I conclude; it is all so very simple.'

'Very,' assented the lawyer without moving a muscle; but his eyes, if he had been so foolish as to open them, would have betrayed the satire.

'Then it could be done at once, in half an hour?'

'What? The deed? The settlement?' The idea of despatch is to a lawyer always hateful; but the suggestion of tying-up a property like Mrs. Beckett's—as if it had been a brown paper parcel—in half an hour, sounded to Mr. Rennie like a blasphemy in the ears of a bishop.

‘I don’t mean that, but I should like to have a note of my intentions drawn out in a proper manner, for my own satisfaction.’

‘What she means,’ said the lawyer to himself, ‘is for private exhibition. She thinks it will bring the tears into the eyes of that specious humbug, whereas it will only make his mouth water. My dear madam, what a fool you are about to make of yourself. It is curious when Nature has done her very best almost in that way, how some folks will improve upon it.’ Then he added aloud, ‘You shall have a note of your instructions before your luncheon hour, Mrs. Beckett.’

He named that time because he felt sure that if the man she had in her mind was Mr. Ralph Dornay he would come to lunch; but he was not quite certain that he was the man. A curiosity very foreign to his character impelled him, as he took his leave, to learn her secret.

‘I suppose it would be indiscreet in me, dear Mrs. Beckett, to hazard a guess as to the subject of our conversation this morning?’

‘It would be indiscreet in me to tell,’ said the widow, smiling, which indeed, considering that no word of love had passed her Edgar’s lips, it certainly would have been.

‘If I was to say that the name of the unknown began with a D and ended with a Y, should I be very far wrong?’

‘You would be getting “warm,” sir, as the children say at “hide and seek,”’ returned the widow, blushing. ‘I need say no more than that.’ And she held out her hand.

Mr. Rennie took and pressed it kindly, but he did not utter one word of congratulation. He thought his client very foolish; but also that she was about to bring upon herself a greater punishment than her folly deserved.

Mrs. Beckett was well satisfied with his silence; in a case like hers she knew enough of the world to be grateful for small mercies. It was something—nay, it was a good deal—that so old a friend and adviser had not dropped a word about the disparity of years. She had not the faintest suspicion of the cause which made any such remarks an impossibility. Her mind was full of her Edgar, and she concluded that of Mr. Rennie was preoccupied with the same individual. If she had told him the truth it is probable that the lawyer would have known better than to attempt remonstrance, but a certain line in the Table of Forbidden Degrees in the Prayer-book would certainly have suggested itself—‘A man may not marry his grandmother.’

CHAPTER IX.

UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

THE Aglaia in Piccadilly is one of those luxurious establishments for the suppression of marriage called clubs, which lets its upper floor in apartments to members. Those who are so fortunate as to secure them need never step out of doors in search of domestic comfort. After eating, and drinking, and smoking—nay, even reading, if their tastes are so exceptional as to lead them to literature—a pass key opens a private door for them on the second floor, and they have only to go up to bed. ‘Home is home, no matter how homely,’ and the sitting-room and two bedrooms rented by the Messrs. Dornay, uncle and nephew, above their club, were as much their home as though they possessed a house in the neighbouring square. Indeed, as to decoration, these three apartments were by no means homely, while the sitting-room was furnished with great luxury. Some of the treasures of Cliffe Park, too precious to be left to the tender mercies of tenants, had been imported into it, and the taste of Mr. Edgar Dornay had supplied whatever had been wanting to its original embellishment.

To the ordinary eye, however, nothing would have seemed to be wanting, from Cliffe Park or anywhere else, for the Aglaia Club, though the beauty of its architecture was disputed (and what is *not* disputed in architecture?), was famous for its fittings. Everything was so mellow and subdued and harmonious, that, if mellowness and subjugation and harmony can effect one-half of what is ascribed to them upon the human soul, all the members of the Aglaia Club would have been as sure of paradise as a Crusader who had killed a Paynim, or *vice versâ*. On the other hand, notwithstanding these elegant surroundings, these gentlemen could scarcely be set down as spiritually minded, nor indeed did they concern themselves much with paradise at all. They were mostly golden, or, more accurately, gilded youths, who resembled lilies less in their purity than in their exemption from toil; for, when folks are idle, it is my firm conviction that not all the sage-green furniture in the world will keep them out of mischief.

In some cases these gilded youths were not very youthful, and in others they had rubbed some of their gilt off.

Mr. Ralph Dornay suffered from both these disadvantages more than people were generally aware of, for, to do him justice, he was a man of courage; nay, of dauntless audacity, and could

held his head up like a man where another would have held it down through consciousness of not being worthy of that title ; one of great resource and of some ingenuity, fit to breast the blows of circumstance and grapple with his evil star if Fate so desired it, and very apt to take advantage of his opportunities when she chanced to be in a better humour.

Sometimes he even made opportunities for himself. A great idea had been shaping itself in his mind of late, or, rather, had suddenly been born there, perfected and complete, as Pallas sprang from the brain of Jove. It was a magnificent conception, the result of which might place him above the aspirations of ambition, but one that was proportionally difficult to carry out. It was not only that there were obstacles in the way, huge as a mountain and as solid, but that his plan required a total change of front in his own views and proceedings. Hitherto he had been a mere satellite of his nephew, content to shine with a very modest lustre in the same firmament, and, upon the whole, a faithful satellite. His best advice, according to his lights, had been always at Edgar's service, and in some things he had given him material aid, not, indeed, from affection, nor even from that tie of blood on which he so much insisted, but because their interests were identical. But now he had it in his mind to be no more a satellite, but a sun, with a system of its own. At present, however, as regarded the attainment of his object he had no system whatever, but only an audacious and well-nigh desperate resolve ; it was necessary to feel his way, and with all the more caution since on some portion of it he would have to retrace his steps.

It was the evening of the day on which Edgar Dornay had accepted Mrs. Beckett's offer, and uncle and nephew were alone together in their private apartment. They had not met since they had lunched together in Park Lane, the younger man having dined out, and the elder at the club, as was usual in both cases. The former had donned his dressing-gown and slippers, but the latter was in full evening panoply. Uncle Ralph was not often seen in dishabille—not because that process of 'breaking up' had by any means begun with him with which most of us, when our ship is no longer classed *Al*, are acquainted, and which men are often quite as solicitous to conceal as are the softer sex, but because he felt the danger, at his age, of once giving way to slovenly habits. He was as fond of ease as most people—nay, fonder—but in his present circumstances he did not consider that

he could afford to take it. His attire, though quite as faultless and more equable—he was never seen in dittos even in September—was not so splendid as that of some members of the Aglaia, and remembering, perhaps, the dictum of the poet—

What are myrtles and wreaths to the brow that is wrinkled!—

he seldom had a flower in his buttonhole. On the present occasion, however, he wore a sprig of stephanotis, which attracted his companion's attention.

‘What! two flowers in one day in your coat, Ralph! You must be going to be married.’

‘The first one, my dear Edgar,’ returned Uncle Ralph, slowly expelling the smoke of his cigar from his lips, and nodding towards the mantle-piece, on which Mary's rose was blushing in a wine-glass as though ashamed of the association, ‘can hardly be considered my own; I look upon it as having been given in trust.’

‘How so?’ inquired the other, with a tinge of colour in his cheek, which did not escape his companion's notice.

‘Well, I hardly think Miss Marvon would have given me anything of her own free will. Moreover, her choice was peculiar. You know the signification of the common rose, no doubt?’

‘I heard you say it was “true love,”’ said Edgar, with a touch of incredulous contempt.

‘That was to spare your feelings. It's true meaning is “Love's Ambassador.” If you yourself are not learned in the language of flowers, Miss Marvon is, you may depend upon it.’

‘I don't believe Miss Marvon ever gave her attention to anything so foolish,’ said Edgar, with irritation.

‘You ought to know best,’ returned the other, shrugging his shoulders. ‘I admit that there is as little doubt of her sagacity as of her beauty; but she is a woman, and being so, must needs have her little weaknesses.’

‘You have insisted upon them often enough, and called them by a worse name,’ remarked his companion, drily.

‘Yes, I own I have been prejudiced, but, really, her sweetness and gentleness made a convert of me this afternoon. *Peccavi*.’

‘What the devil do you mean?’ exclaimed the young man, sharply. ‘Why, it was only the other day you told me her tongue was like a whip.’

‘So it was—to me. But when she speaks of some one else who bears the same name, it is a privilege to listen to her. Her lips drop honey. As for me, I fairly threw down my arms to-day,

and owned myself vanquished. "I confess, my dear Miss Marvon," I said, "that hitherto I have been in opposition to you, but henceforth I am your ally; you may rely on me to advance your interests and your wishes in every way in my power."

'And what did she say to all that?'

'I had hoped you would not have asked me,' said Uncle Ralph in an injured tone; 'she told me that she had no confidence whatever in my protestations, and that as for my alliance, she didn't care one halfpenny whether I was her ally or her enemy—or words to that effect.'

'A brave girl, an honest girl!' murmured the young man admiringly. 'Dear, dear,' he sighed, 'what a happy world this would be if one could only do as one liked in it!'

'Now really, Edgar, you astonish me!' returned the other with raised eyebrows. 'I should have thought that was the very condition under which you had accepted existence. May I ask what you have ever done that you didn't like?'

'Well, for one thing, I lost 500*l.* at Ascot.'

'True,' replied Uncle Ralph sententiously; 'that was certainly a miscarriage of justice. Still it is not an overwhelming misfortune.'

'You would have found it deucedly inconvenient, Ralph, if it had happened to *you*.'

To this observation, as being absolutely indisputable, Uncle Ralph made no reply. 'As to the turf,' he observed, 'whether one has fifty pounds a year or fifty thousand, the end is the same to everybody who goes in for it. If you would only resolve to give up betting, my dear Edgar, every other pleasure would lie within your grasp. You have a very tolerable income. Although I have often advised you to marry money, I am not sure whether in your case an economical wife without a dowry would not in the end be cheaper to you than a rich one who had been brought up—as they all are—in habits of extravagance. It is not as if you would have to live on bread and cheese.'

'This is quite a new view of affairs!' said Edgar scornfully.

'I know it; I have confessed as much, and how I have been converted. Moreover, this Ascot business put *this* in my mind: perhaps if my nephew married the girl he loved, and who will be absolutely dependent on him, he would consent to give up for her sake a dangerous habit, which he will never forego for his own. With her he is secure of happiness if he will only be content with that; and how few of us are able to look forward to such a future.'

'How strange it is,' returned the other with quiet scorn, 'that

a man of your age, Uncle Ralph, and who knows that it is deadly to you, *will* continue to take champagne at dinner, and such lots of it.'

A quick, uneasy smile flitted over his companion's face. 'No, Edgar, I am quite sober, and very serious; nay, in sackcloth and ashes. I am afraid I have done mischief to you through meaning well. In one matter, at least, and a most important one, I have hitherto used what little influence I may be so fortunate to have with you for evil and not for good. It is not pleasant to have to eat one's words, but I believe I have been all wrong about Miss Marvon.'

'Your repentance, like that of most people, Uncle Ralph,' replied the young man gravely, 'comes a little too late.'

'How so? How can it be too late?' put in the other quickly; 'why, it is not six hours ago since Miss Marvon herself——'

'Very likely,' interrupted the young man with a forced smile; 'but to the other party interested—the humble individual who is now addressing you—something has happened within those same six hours. In point of fact, my dear fellow, I am going to be married to Mrs. Beckett.'

Uncle Ralph's cigar dropped from his lips, and lay unheeded where it fell on the delicate carpet.

'Impossible! Incredible! You cannot be really serious, Edgar?'

'It is true as I sit here. It need not astonish you so far as the widow is concerned. I am not so vain or so base as to boast of such things, but you must surely have observed that she had a *tendresse* for me.'

'A *tendresse*! I know of course she liked you—looked upon you with maternal affection.' Edgar shook his head and screwed up his mouth; then, observing the look of genuine disgust on his companion's face, he burst out into a peal of laughter.

'If it's a joke,' said Uncle Ralph, 'I'll laugh with you, Edgar, and welcome. If you really mean that you are thinking of marrying Mrs. Beckett——'

'I am not thinking of it, I *have* thought of it,' put in the other, 'and I am going to do it.'...

'Then you're going to disgrace yourself, Edgar, and the honour of the family.'

'As to the family, Uncle Ralph,' was the quiet reply, 'I know no one belonging to it, except yourself, for whose opinion I care one farthing.'

'There are the Dead, Edgar,' answered the other impressively; 'your long line of illustrious ancestors are not, I hope, to be put altogether out of account.'

'What a marvellous humbug you are, Ralph! You are like the cardsharp, who through long practice could deceive himself in his own looking glass, when practising his sleight-of-hand tricks. From continually maundering about the Dornay blood you have got to persuade yourself that there is something in it different from that of other people.'

'I venture to think there is,' returned Uncle Ralph.

'Very good; stick to your theory for all I care; but don't try to force it down the throat of your connections, who know better. Keep it for the general public. And another thing I must request of you—not to talk to me about my disgracing myself. I am the best judge of my own actions and intentions, and I will submit to neither reproof nor dictation from any human being.'

The young man had risen from his chair, and, striding from one end of the room to the other, delivered these words with much fire and fury.

'If I said disgrace, Edgar, I withdraw the word,' said the other gently; 'my affection and respect for you must be my excuse for my warmth of expression. What I shrank from was the contemplation of such self-sacrifice. That you, with your social position, your talents, your youth, should thus throw all your advantages to the winds; it is pitiful, my dear Edgar, it is pitiful!'

Uncle Ralph regarded his nephew with the same sort of regretful admiration that an aunt might entertain for a niece who had announced her intention of becoming an old man's darling. 'So young, so fair,' he seemed to be saying to himself, 'how is it possible that you can thus sell yourself to this comparatively ancient personage?'

'I have very good reasons for the step I am about to take,' said Edgar, mollified in spite of himself by this high estimate of his personal value.

'Thirty thousand of them per annum,' suggested Uncle Ralph drily. 'Still there is a saying that one may buy even money too dearly. And it won't be *your* money to do what you like with, my poor fellow.'

'That is my affair, Ralph; though indeed I have every confidence in Mrs. Beckett's consideration and generosity.'

'Still it is more than likely that her hands are tied.'

'Nonsense; it is well known that Mrs. Beckett has entire control of her income. Not that *I* should want that, as her late husband did, Heaven knows. The man was a greedy, ill-conditioned brute.'

‘Oh, I don’t question that she will find you a much more agreeable consort,’ put in Uncle Ralph. ‘There is not the least fear of your suffering from any unpleasant comparisons. But what was Mr. Beckett’s happy fate as respects finance may not be yours. Sir Peter may have left his widow free to marry once, but not a second time.’

‘Pooh! that’s ridiculous.’

‘Nevertheless, before committing yourself it would be worth while to look at Sir Peter’s will. If it’s too much trouble, just ask young Sotheran, who is at the Probate Office, to look the thing up.’

‘Sotheran be hanged!’ exclaimed Edgar. The irritation in his tone did not escape the keen ear of his companion, who had by this time recovered both his equanimity and his cigar.

‘Just as you please, my dear boy; but if I were in your place I would do nothing in a hurry in this matter. There is plenty of time before you at all events.’

‘The matter is done, Ralph. The widow——’ Here he stopped, for, with all his faults, Edgar Dornay was too much of a gentleman to expose a woman who loved him to ridicule, as would certainly have been the case had he told the true story of his engagement. ‘I have already proposed to Mrs. Beckett, and have had the good fortune to be accepted.’

‘Not in writing, Edgar?’ inquired the other eagerly. ‘Surely not in writing?’

‘Yes, in writing.’

‘I never heard of anything so ill-judged and infatuated in my life,’ cried Uncle Ralph, taking his handkerchief from his breast and passing it across his face. There was no doubt about the genuineness of his emotion; though he did not shed tears, the dew was literally upon his face. ‘How could you, *could* you, thus wreck all your prospects in life?’

‘One would think I was a novice taking the veil,’ observed Edgar grimly. Your tone and manner would scarcely be justified if I were a boy of twenty and Mrs. Beckett were three-score years and ten.’

‘But what on earth could have induced you to do it, my poor Edgar?’

‘Well, I acted from mixed motives; it was done on the spur of the moment.’

‘Ah! you were intoxicated by the contemplation of her charms!’

‘You will be so good as to remember, Ralph,’ observed the young man sharply, ‘that we are speaking of my future wife.’

.. 'True. Pardon me. The whole thing is so like a dream—a nightmare—that I forget it was reality. But what was the reason of this sudden resolve of yours? Was it gratitude?'

'Possibly—that is to say, in part.'

'She has laid you, then, under some pecuniary obligation. Oh, Edgar, Edgar, why did you not come to me?'

'What would have been the good of it? You couldn't have given me a cheque for 500*l*. I suppose; and how were my Ascot debts to be settled?'

'Five hundred pounds! Do you mean to say you have sold yourself for five hundred pounds?' Uncle Ralph started to his feet with a speed of which one would have supposed him incapable. He drew a key from his pocket, opened his desk, and, taking out his banking book, pitched it into his nephew's lap. 'I have more than two thousand pounds there, as you can see for yourself, only awaiting investment, to which you are as welcome, my lad, as flowers in May.'

'You are very kind, most kind, Ralph,' said Edgar gently; 'perhaps, if I had known about it before I might have been your debtor. I had thought you were as hard up—at least for ready money—as myself.'

Uncle Ralph looked a little embarrassed; he had certainly not sought the reputation of being the sort of man who has two thousand pounds lying idle at his banker's.

'I kept the money there for a purpose which no longer exists,' he explained, 'for an emergency that has passed away. Pray take it, or what you need of it.'

'It is too late,' answered Edgar, with a sigh. 'Mrs. Beckett would, indeed, have a right to complain of me if I withdrew my offer because the necessity which impelled me to make it had ceased to exist. Indeed, I am wrong to speak of necessity in the matter; I again repeat that I had mixed motives. I like Mrs. Beckett very much.'

'I am afraid, my dear Edgar, that there is another woman who in the event of this mad marriage will also have a right to complain.'

'You didn't think so yesterday,' returned the young man scornfully.

'Yes, I did, yesterday afternoon, when I heard her speaking about you unreservedly for the first time. Poor, dear Miss Marvon.'

Edgar Dornay's brow grew very dark.

'You, at least,' he answered vehemently, 'have no right to

taunt me about Miss Marvon ; nor will I listen to another word as regards my conduct towards her from your lips. It is enough to feel that one has behaved dishonourably, without being preached at by those who are no better than ourselves.'

To this somewhat pointed remark a slight elevation of his broad shoulders was all the reply that Uncle Ralph ventured to make.

'We shall meet at breakfast to-morrow morning, I conclude,' he said as he lit his bedroom candle.

'No ; I breakfast out.'

'In Park Lane, I suppose ?'

'No ; I shall not make my appearance there till Monday, at three o'clock.'

He did not think it necessary to mention that he was going to Brighton on the morrow till Monday, and would be out of the reach of his companion's arguments for the next six-and-thirty hours.

As Uncle Ralph opened his bedroom door he turned and said, with a slight smile, 'There is somebody who will say of this that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good." Mr. Charles Sotheran—or Charley, as Miss Marvon calls him—will now have the field all to himself.'

'Mary will never marry Sotheran,' cried Edgar vehemently.

'Why not ?' inquired Ralph with simplicity.

'Because—because—why, because, of course, she doesn't care for him.'

'Nay ; you mean that at present she would not marry him because she doesn't care for him so much as for you. If No. 1 marries some one else, of course she will fall back on No. 2. However, that is her affair, and one of very small consequence in comparison with other matters—good-night, my dear fellow.'

Having shot that Parthian shaft, Uncle Ralph closed his bedroom door. If what happened to Mary, inclusive even of her possible union with Charley, was of small consequence to the speaker, it seemed to be of some moment to his nephew. His lips were absolutely pale with rage, and he muttered words concerning the probate clerk which, if set down in a will, would have invalidated it, as evidencing madness in the testator. No argument which Uncle Ralph had hitherto hit upon had had such weight with him as that parting arrow loosed at random. It had gone home to the young man's very heart, and the barb was rankling in the wound.

(To be continued.)

John Harrison, the Chronometer-Maker.

AT the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, one of the most remarkable instruments is to be seen—the first chronometer, the parent of a numerous progeny of chronometers, used on board of every sea-going ship, to the advantage of navigation, of commerce, as well as of science. As far back as the reign of Queen Anne, in the year 1714, the English Government offered the large prize of 20,000*l.* to the person who should find the method of discovering the longitude at sea, within certain specified limits. The reward was offered to the world, to inventors and scientific men of all countries, without any restriction of nation, or race, or language. To the surprise of everyone—it was thought remarkable, and it *was* remarkable—the prize was won by a man who had been brought up as a village carpenter, of no school, or college, or university. But the truth is that the great mechanic, like the poet, is born, not made; and John Harrison, the winner of the famous prize, was a born mechanic. He did not, however, accomplish his object without the exercise of the greatest skill, patience, and perseverance. Indeed, his life, so far as we can ascertain the facts of it, is one of the finest examples of difficulties overcome, and of undaunted perseverance eventually crowned by success, in the whole range of biography.

No complete narrative of Harrison's career was ever written. Only a short notice of him appears in the 'Biographica Britannica,' published in 1766, during his lifetime,—the facts of which were obtained from himself. A few notices of him appear in the 'Annual Register,' also published during his lifetime. But no Life of him has since appeared. Had he won battles by land or sea, we should have had biographies of him without end. But he pursued a more peaceful and industrious course. His discovery conferred an incalculable advantage on navigation, and enabled innumerable lives to be saved at sea; it also added to the domains of science by its more exact measurement of time. But his memory has been allowed to pass silently away, without any record being left for the benefit and advantage of those who

have succeeded him. The following memoir includes nearly all that is known of the life and labours of John Harrison.

He was born at Foulby, in the parish of Wragby, near Pontefract, Yorkshire, in May 1693. His father, Henry Harrison, was carpenter and joiner to Sir Rowland Wynne, owner of the Nostel Priory estate. The present house was built by the baronet on the site of the ancient priory. Henry Harrison was a sort of retainer of the family, and he long continued in their service.

Little is known of the boy's education. It was certainly of a very inferior description. Like George Stephenson, Harrison had always a great difficulty in making himself understood, either by speech or writing. Indeed, every board-school boy receives a better education now than John Harrison did a hundred and eighty years ago. But education does not altogether come by reading and writing. The boy was possessed of vigorous natural abilities. He was especially attracted by every machine that moved *upon wheels*. The boy was thus 'father to the man.' When six years old, and lying sick of small-pox, a going watch was placed upon his pillow, which afforded him infinite delight.

When seven years old he was taken by his father to Barrow, near Barton-on-Humber, where Sir Rowland Wynne had another residence and estate. Henry Harrison was still acting as the baronet's carpenter and joiner. In course of time young Harrison joined his father in the workshop, and proved of great use to him. His opportunities for acquiring knowledge were still very few, but he applied his powers of observation and his workmanship to the things that were nearest him. He worked in wood, and to wood he first devoted his attention.

He was still fond of machines going upon wheels. He had enjoyed the sight of the big watch going upon brass wheels when he was a boy; but, now that he was a workman in wood, he proposed to make a time-keeper with wheels of that material. After many difficulties—and nothing can be accomplished without them—he succeeded in making a wooden clock, with wheels of wood. This, however, was only a beginning. He proceeded to make better clocks; and then he found it necessary to introduce metal, as being more lasting. He made pivots of brass, which moved more conveniently in sockets of wood, with the use of oil. He also caused the teeth of his wheels to run against cylindrical rollers of wood, fixed by brass pins, at a proper distance from the axis of the pinions; and thus to a considerable extent he removed the inconveniences of friction.

In the meantime Harrison eagerly improved every incident from which he might derive further information. There was a clergyman who came every Sunday to the village to officiate in the neighbourhood; and having heard of the sedulous application of the young carpenter, he lent a manuscript copy of Professor Saunderson's discoveries. The blind professor had prepared several lectures on natural philosophy for the use of his students, but they were never intended for publication. Young Harrison now proceeded to copy them out, together with the diagrams. Sometimes, indeed, he spent the greater part of the night in writing or drawing.

As part of his business, he undertook to survey land, and to repair clocks and watches, besides carrying on his trade of a carpenter. He soon obtained a considerable knowledge of what had been done in clocks and watches, and was able to do not only what the best professional workers had done, but to strike out entirely new light in the clock- and watch-making business. He found out a method of diminishing friction by adding a joint to the pallets of the pendulum, whereby they were made to work in the nature of rollers of a large radius, without any sliding, as usual, upon the teeth of the wheel. He constructed a clock on the recoiling principle, which went perfectly and never lost a minute within fourteen years. Sir Edmund B. Denison says that he invented this method in order to save himself the trouble of going so frequently to oil the escapement of a turret clock, of which he had charge; though there were other influences at work besides this.

But his most important invention, at this early period of his life, was his compensation pendulum. Everyone knows that metals expand with heat and contract by cold. The pendulum of the clock therefore expanded in summer and contracted in winter, thereby interfering with the regular going of the clock. Huygens had by his cylindrical checks removed the great irregularity arising from the unequal lengths of the oscillations; but the pendulum was affected by the tossing of a ship at sea, and was also subject to a variation in weight, depending on the parallel of latitude. Graham, the well-known clockmaker, invented the mercurial compensation pendulum, consisting of a glass or iron jar filled with quicksilver and fixed to the end of the pendulum rod. When the rod was lengthened by heat, the quicksilver and the jar which contained it were simultaneously expanded and elevated, and the centre of oscillation was thus continued at the same distance from the point of suspension.

But the difficulty, to a certain extent, remained unconquered until Harrison took the matter in hand. He observed that all rods of metal do not alter their lengths equally by heat, or, on the contrary, become shorter by cold, but some more sensibly than others. After innumerable experiments Harrison at length composed a frame somewhat resembling a gridiron, in which the alternate bars were of steel and of brass, and so arranged that those which expanded the most were counteracted by those which expanded the least. By this means the pendulum contained the power of equalising its own action, and the centre of oscillation continued at the same absolute distance from the point of suspension through all the variations of heat and cold during the year.

Thus by the year 1726, when he was only twenty-three years old, Harrison had furnished himself with two compensation clocks, in which all the irregularities to which these machines were subject were either removed or so happily balanced, one metal against the other, that the two clocks kept time together in different parts of his house, without the variation of more than a single second in the month. One of them, indeed, which he kept by him for his own use, and constantly compared with a fixed star, did not vary so much as one minute during the ten years that he continued in the country after finishing the machine.

Living, as he did, not far from the sea, Harrison next endeavoured to arrange his timekeeper for purposes of navigation. He tried his clock in a vessel belonging to Barton-on-Humber; but his compensating pendulum could there be of comparatively little use; for it was liable to be tossed hither or thither by the sudden motions of the ship. He found it necessary, therefore, to mount a chronometer, or portable timekeeper, which might be taken from place to place, and subjected to the violent and irregular motion of a ship at sea, without affecting its rate of going. It was evident to him that the first mover must be changed from a weight and pendulum to a spring wound up and a compensating balance.

He now applied his genius in this direction. After pondering over the subject in his mind, he proceeded to London in 1728, and exhibited his drawings to Dr. Halley, then Astronomer Royal. The Doctor referred him to Mr. George Graham, the distinguished horologer, inventor of the dead-beat escapement. After examining the drawings and holding some converse with Harrison, Graham perceived him to be a man of uncommon merit and gave him every encouragement. He recommended him,

however, to make his machine before again applying to the Board of Longitude. He accordingly returned home to Barrow to complete his task, and many years elapsed before he again appeared in London to present his chronometer.

The remarkable success which Harrison had achieved in his compensating pendulum could not but urge him on to further experiments. He was no doubt to a certain extent influenced by the reward of 20,000*l.* which the English Government had offered many years before for an instrument that should enable the longitude to be more accurately determined by navigators at sea than was then possible; and it was with the object of obtaining pecuniary assistance to assist him in completing his chronometer that Harrison made his first visit to London to exhibit his drawings in 1728.

The Act of Parliament offering this superb reward was passed in 1714, in the twelfth year of the reign of Queen Anne. It was right that England, then rapidly advancing to the first position as a commercial nation, should make every effort to render navigation less hazardous. At that time the ship, when fairly at sea, out of sight of land, and battling with the winds and tides, was in a measure lost. No method existed for accurately ascertaining the longitude. The ship might be out of its course for one or two hundred miles, for anything that the navigator knew; and only the wreck of his ship on some unknown coast told of the mistake which he had made in his reckoning.

It may here be mentioned that it was comparatively easy to determine the latitude of a ship at sea every day when the sun was visible. The latitude—that is, the distance of any spot from the equator and the pole—might be found by a simple observation with the sextant. The altitude of the sun at noon is found, and by a short calculation the position of the ship may be ascertained.

The sextant, which is the instrument universally used at sea, was gradually evolved from similar instruments used from the earliest times. The object of these instruments has always been to find the angular distance between two bodies—that is to say, the angle of two straight lines which are drawn from those bodies to meet in the observer's eye. The simplest instrument of this kind may be well represented by a pair of compasses. If the hinge is held to the eye, one leg pointed to the distant horizon, and the other leg pointed to the sun, the two legs will be separated by a certain angle, which will be the

angular distance of the sun from the horizon at the moment of observation.

Until the end of the seventeenth century the instrument used was of this simple kind. It was generally a large quadrant, with one or two bars moving on a hinge,—to all intents and purposes a huge pair of compasses. The direction of the sight was fixed by the use of a slit and a pointer, much as in the ordinary rifle. This instrument was vastly improved by the use of a telescope, which not only allowed fainter objects to be seen, but especially enabled the sight to be accurately directed to the object observed.

The instruments of the pre-telescopic age reached their glory in the hands of Tycho Brahe. He used magnificent instruments of the simple 'pair of compasses' kind—circles, quadrants, and sextants. These were for the most part ponderous fixed instruments, and of little or no use for the purposes of navigation. But Tycho Brahe's sextant proved the forerunner of the modern instrument. The general structure is the same; but the vast improvement of the modern sextant is due, firstly, to the use of the reflecting mirror, and, secondly, to the use of the telescope for accurate sighting. These improvements were due to many scientific men—to William Gascoigne, who first used the telescope, about 1640; to Robert Hooke, who, in 1660, proposed to apply it to the quadrant; to Sir Isaac Newton, who designed a reflecting quadrant;¹ and to John Hadley, who introduced it. The modern sextant is merely a modification of Newton's or Hadley's quadrant, and its present construction seems to be perfect.

It therefore became possible accurately to determine the position of a ship at sea as regarded its latitude. But it was quite different as regarded the longitude—that is, the distance of any place from a given meridian, eastward or westward. In the case of longitude there is no fixed spot to which reference can be made. The rotation of the earth makes the existence of such a spot impossible. The question of longitude is purely a question of TIME. The circuit of the globe, east and west, is simply represented by twenty-four hours. Each place has its own time. It is very easy to determine the local time at any spot by observations made at that spot. But, as time is always changing, the knowledge of the local time gives no idea of the position of

¹ Sir Isaac Newton gave his design to Edmund Halley, then Astronomer Royal. Halley laid it on one side, and it was found among his papers after his death in 1742, and twenty-five years after the death of Newton.

a moving object—say, of a ship at sea. But if, in any locality, we know the local time, and also the local time of some other locality at that moment—say, of the Observatory at Greenwich—we can, by comparing the two local times, determine the difference of local times, or, what is the same thing, the difference of longitude between the two places. It was necessary therefore for the navigator to be in possession of a first-rate watch or chronometer, to enable him to determine accurately the position of his ship at sea, as respected the longitude.

Before the middle of the eighteenth century good watches were comparatively unknown. The navigator mainly relied upon his Dead Reckoning, without any observation of the heavenly bodies. He depended upon the accuracy of the course which he had steered by the compass, and the mensuration of the ship's velocity by an instrument called the log, as well as by combining and rectifying all the allowances for drift, lee-way, and so on, according to the trim of the ship; but all of these were liable to much uncertainty, especially when the sea was in a boisterous condition. There was another and independent course which might have been adopted—that is, by observation of the moon, which is constantly moving amongst the stars from west to east. But until the middle of the eighteenth century good lunar tables were as much unknown as good watches.

Hence a method of ascertaining the longitude, with the same degree of accuracy which is attainable in respect of latitude, had for ages been the grand desideratum for men 'who go down to the sea in ships.' Mr. Macpherson, in his important work entitled '*The Annals of Commerce*,' observes, 'Since the year 1714, when Parliament offered a reward of 20,000*l.* for the best method of ascertaining the longitude at sea, many schemes have been devised, but all to little or no purpose, as going generally upon wrong principles, till that Heaven-taught artist Mr. John Harrison arose;' and by him, as Mr. Macpherson goes on to say, the difficulty was conquered, having devoted to it 'the assiduous studies of a long life.'

The preamble of the Act of Parliament in question runs as follows: 'Whereas it is well known by all that are acquainted with the art of navigation that nothing is so much wanted and desired at sea as the discovery of the longitude, for the safety and quickness of voyages, the preservation of ships and the lives of men,' and so on. The Act proceeds to constitute certain persons commissioners for the discovery of the longitude, with power to

receive and experiment upon proposals for that purpose, and to grant sums of money not exceeding 2,000*l.* to aid in such experiments. The clause of the Act, by which rewards are offered to such inventors or discoverers as shall succeed in enabling the longitude to be ascertained within certain limits, is as follows :—

‘And for a due and sufficient encouragement to any such person or persons as shall discover a proper method for finding the said longitude, be it enacted by the authority aforesaid that the first author or authors, discoverer or discoverers, of any such method, his or their executors, administrators, or assigns, shall be entitled to, and shall have, such reward as is hereinafter mentioned ; that is to say, to a reward or sum of 10,000*l.* if it determines the said longitude to one degree of a great circle, or sixty geographical miles ; to 15,000*l.* if it determines the same to two-thirds of that distance ; and to 20,000*l.* if it determines the same to one-half of the same distance ; and that one moiety or half part of such reward or sum shall be due and paid when the said commissioners, or the major part of them, do agree that any such method extends to the security of ships within eighty geographical miles of the shores which are the places of the greatest danger, and the other moiety or half part when a ship, by the appointment of the said commissioners, or the major part of them, shall thereby actually sail over the ocean from Great Britain to any such port in the West Indies as these commissioners, or the major part of them, shall choose or nominate for the experiment, without losing their longitude beyond the limits before mentioned.’

It will, in these days, be scarcely believed that little more than a hundred and fifty years ago a prize of not less than ten thousand pounds should have been offered for a method of determining the longitude within *sixty miles*, and that double the amount should have been offered for a method of determining it within *thirty miles* ! The amount of these rewards is sufficient proof of the fearful necessity for improvement which then existed in the methods of navigation. And yet, from the date of the passing of the Act in 1714 until the year 1736, when Harrison finished his first timepiece, nothing had been done towards ascertaining the longitude more accurately, even within the wide limits specified by the Act of Parliament. Although several schemes had been projected, none of them had proved successful, and the offered rewards therefore still remained unclaimed.

To return to Harrison. After reaching his home at Barrow, after his visit to London in 1728, he began his experiments for

the construction of a marine chronometer. The task was one of no small difficulty. It was necessary to provide against irregularities arising from the motion of a ship at sea, and to obviate the effect of alternations of temperature in the machine itself, as well as in the oil with which it was lubricated. A thousand obstacles presented themselves, but they were not enough to deter Harrison from grappling with the work he had set himself to perform.

Everyone knows the beautiful machinery of a timepiece, and the perfect tools required to produce such a machine. Some of these Harrison procured in London, but the greater number he produced for himself. Many entirely new adaptations were required for his chronometer. Wood could no longer be employed, and he had therefore to teach himself to work accurately and minutely in brass and other metals. Having been unable to obtain any assistance from the Board of Longitude, he was under the necessity, while carrying forward his experiments, of maintaining himself by working at his trade of a carpenter and joiner. This will account for the very long period that elapsed before he could bring his chronometer to such a state that it might be tried with any approach to certainty in its operations.

Harrison, besides his intentness and earnestness in respect of the great work of his life, was a cheerful and hopeful man. He had a fine taste for music, and organised and led the choir of the village church, which attained a high degree of perfection. He invented a curious monochord, which was not less accurate than his clocks in the mensuration of time. His ear was distressed by the ringing of bells out of tune, and he set himself to remedy them. At the parish church of Hull, for instance, the bells were harsh and disagreeable, and by the authority of the vicar and churchwardens he was allowed to put them into a state of exact tune, so that they proved entirely melodious.

But the great work of his life was his marine chronometer. He found it necessary, in the first place, to alter the first mover of his clock to a spring wound up, so that the regularity of the motion might be derived from the vibrations of balances, instead of those of a pendulum in a standing clock. Mr. Folkes, President of the Royal Society, when presenting the gold medal to Mr. Harrison in 1749, thus describes the arrangement of his new machine. The details were obtained from Harrison himself, who was present. He made use of two balances situated in the same plane, but vibrating in contrary directions, so that the one of these

being either way assisted by the tossing of the ship, the other might constantly be just so much impeded by it at the same time. As the equality of the times of the vibrations of the balance of a pocket-watch is in a great measure owing to the spiral spring that lies under it, so the same was here performed by the like elasticity of four cylindrical springs or worms, applied near the upper and lower extremities of the two balances above described.

Then came in the question of compensation. Harrison's experience with the compensation pendulum of his clock now proved of service to him. He proceeded to introduce a similar expedient into his proposed chronometer. As is well known to those who are acquainted with the nature of springs moved by balances, the stronger those springs are the quicker the vibrations of the balances are performed, and *vice versâ*; so it follows that those springs, when braced by cold, or when relaxed by heat, must of necessity cause the timekeeper to go either faster or slower, unless some method could be found to remedy the inconvenience.

The method adopted by Harrison was his compensation balance, doubtless the backbone of his invention. His 'thermometer kirk,' he himself says, 'is composed of two thin plates of brass and steel, riveted together in several places, which, by the greater expansion of brass than steel by heat and contraction by cold, becomes convex on the brass side in hot weather and convex on the steel side in cold weather; whence, one end being fixed, the other end obtains a motion corresponding with the changes of heat and cold, and the two pins at the end, between which the balance spring passes, and which it alternately touches as the spring bends and unbends itself, will shorten or lengthen the spring, as the change of heat or cold would otherwise require to be done by hand in the manner used for regulating a common watch.' Although the method has since been improved upon by Leroy, Arnold, and Earnshaw, it was the beginning of all that has since been done in the perfection of marine chronometers. Indeed, it is amazing to think of the number of clever, skilful, and industrious men who have been engaged for many hundred years in the production of that exquisite fabric—so useful to everybody, whether scientific or otherwise, on land or sea—the modern watch.

It is unnecessary here to mention in detail the particulars of Harrison's invention. These were published by himself in his 'Principles of Mr. Harrison's Timekeeper.' It may, however, be mentioned that he invented a method by which the chronometer might be kept going without losing a second of time. This was

during the process of winding up, which was done once in a day. While the mainspring was being wound up a secondary one preserved the motion of the wheels and kept the machine going.

After seven years' labour, during which Harrison encountered and overcame numerous difficulties, he at last completed his first marine chronometer. He placed it in a sort of moveable frame, somewhat resembling what the sailors call a 'compass jumble,' but much more artificially and curiously made and arranged. In this state the chronometer was tried from time to time in a large barge on the river Humber, in rough as well as in smooth weather, and it was found to go perfectly, without losing a moment of time.

Such was the condition of Harrison's chronometer when he arrived in London with it in 1735, in order to apply to the commissioners appointed for providing a public reward for the discovery of the longitude at sea. He first showed it to several members of the Royal Society, who cordially approved of it. Five of the most prominent members—Dr. Halley, Dr. Smith, Dr. Bradley, Mr. John Machin, and Mr. George Graham—furnished Harrison with a certificate, stating that the principles of his machine for measuring time promised a very great and sufficient degree of exactness. In consequence of this certificate the machine, at the request of the inventor and at the recommendation of Sir Charles Wager, First Lord of the Admiralty, was placed on board a man-of-war, and carried, with Mr. Harrison, to Lisbon and back again. The chronometer was not affected by the roughest weather, or by the working of the ship through the vast rolling waves of the Bay of Biscay. By means of its exact measurement of time an error of almost a degree and a half (or ninety miles) in the computations of the reckoning of the ship was corrected at the mouth of the Channel.

Upon this first successful trial of his chronometer the Commissioners of Longitude gave Harrison the sum of 500*l.*, on condition that he should proceed to make further improvements in his machine. Mr. George Graham urged that the Commissioners should award him double the amount; but this was refused. At the recommendation of Lord Monson, however, Harrison accepted the sum as a help towards the heavy expenses and labour which he had incurred, and was about to incur, in perfecting the machine. He was instructed to make his new chronometer of less dimensions than the first, which was thought too cumbersome and to occupy too much space on board.

He accordingly proceeded to make his second chronometer. It occupied a space of about only half the size of the first. He introduced several improvements. He lessened the number of the wheels, and thereby diminished friction. But the general arrangement remained the same. This second machine was finished in 1739. It was much more simple in its arrangement, and much less cumbrous in its dimensions. It answered even better than the first, and though it was not tried at sea its motions were sufficiently exact for finding the longitude within the nearest limits proposed by Parliament.

Not satisfied with his two machines, Harrison proceeded to make a third. This was of an improved construction, and occupied still less space, the whole of the machine and its apparatus standing upon an area of only four square feet. It was in such forwardness in January 1741 that it was exhibited before the Royal Society, and twelve of the most prominent members signed a certificate of 'its great and excellent use, as well for determining the longitude at sea as for correcting the charts of the coasts.' The testimonial concluded: 'We do recommend Mr. Harrison to the favour of the Commissioners appointed by Act of Parliament as a person highly deserving of such further encouragement and assistance as they shall judge proper and sufficient to finish his third machine.' The Commissioners granted him a further sum of 500*l.* accordingly. Harrison was now reduced to necessitous circumstances by his continuous application to the improvement of the timekeepers. He had also got into debt, and required further assistance to enable him to proceed with their construction.

Although Harrison had promised that the third machine would be ready for trial on August 1, 1743, it was not finished for some years after. In June 1746 we find him again appearing before the Board, asking for further assistance. While proceeding with his work he found it necessary to add a new spring, 'having spent much time and thought in tempering them.' Another 500*l.* was voted to enable him to pay his debts, to maintain himself and family, and to complete his machine.

Three years later he exhibited his third machine to the Royal Society, when he was awarded the Gold Medal for the year. In presenting it Mr. Folkes, the President, said to Mr. Harrison, 'I do here, by the authority and in the name of the Royal Society of London for the improving of natural knowledge, present you with this small but faithful token of their regard and esteem. I

do, in their name, congratulate you upon the successes you have already had, and I most sincerely wish that all your future trials may in every way prove answerable to these beginnings, and that the full accomplishment of your great undertaking may at last be crowned with all the reputation and advantage to yourself that your warmest wishes may suggest, and to which so many years so laudably and so diligently spent in the improvement of those talents which God Almighty has bestowed upon you, will so justly entitle your constant and unwearied perseverance.'

Mr. Folkes, in his speech, spoke of Mr. Harrison as 'one of the most modest persons he had ever known.' 'In speaking of his own performances he has assured me that, from the immense number of diligent and accurate experiments he has made, and from the severe tests to which he has in many ways put his instruments, he expects he shall be able with sufficient certainty, through all the greatest variety of seasons and the most irregular motions of the sea, to keep time constantly, without the variation of so much as *three seconds in a week*, a degree of exactness that is astonishing and even stupendous, considering the immense number of difficulties, and those of very different sorts, which the author of these inventions must have had to encounter and struggle withal.'

Although it is common enough now to make first-rate chronometers—sufficient to determine the longitude with almost perfect accuracy in every clime of the world—it was very different then, at the time that Harrison was occupied with his laborious experiments. Although he considered his third machine to be the *ne plus ultra* of scientific mechanism, he nevertheless proceeded to construct a fourth timepiece, in the form of a pocket watch about five inches in diameter. He found the principles which he had adopted in his larger machines to apply equally well in the smaller; and the performances of the last surpassed his utmost expectations. But in the meantime, as his *third* timekeeper was, in his opinion, sufficient to supply the requirements of the Board of Longitude as respected the highest reward offered, he applied to the Commissioners for leave to try that instrument on board a royal ship to some port in the West Indies, as directed by the statute of Queen Anne.

It was not until March 12, 1761, that he received orders for his son William to proceed to Portsmouth, and go on board the 'Dorsetshire' man-of-war, to proceed to Jamaica. But another tedious delay occurred. The ship was ordered elsewhere, and

William Harrison, after remaining five months at Portsmouth, returned to London. By this time John Harrison has finished his *fourth* timepiece—the small one—in the form of a watch. At length William Harrison set sail with this timekeeper from Portsmouth for Jamaica in the ‘Deptford’ man-of-war, on November 18, 1761, and returned to England on March 26, 1762. On the arrival of the ship at Port Royal the timekeeper was found to be only five and one-tenth seconds in error, and during the voyage of over four months, on its return to Portsmouth in the ‘Merlin,’ it had only erred one minute fifty-four and a half seconds. In the latitude of Portsmouth this only amounted to eighteen geographical miles, whereas the Act required that it should only come within the distance of thirty miles or minutes of a great circle. One would have thought that Harrison was now clearly entitled to his reward of 20,000*l*.

But the delays interposed by Government are long and tedious. Harrison had accomplished more than was requisite to obtain the highest reward. It was necessary for him to petition Parliament on the subject. Three reigns had passed: Anne had died; George I. and George II. had reigned and died; and now in the reign of George III. an Act was passed enabling Harrison to obtain the sum of 5,000*l*. immediately as part of the reward. But the Commissioners differed about the tempering of the springs. They required a second trial of the timekeeper. Two more years passed, and Harrison’s son again departed with the instrument on board the ‘Tartar’ for Barbadoes on March 28, 1764. He returned in about four months, during which time the instrument enabled the latitude to be ascertained within *ten* miles, or *one-third* the required geographical distance.

Harrison memorialised the Board again and again. In the following September they virtually recognised his claims by paying him on account 1,000*l*. In February 1765 the Board entered a minute on their proceedings that they were ‘unanimously of opinion that the said [Harrison’s] timekeeper has kept its time with sufficient correctness, without losing its longitude in the voyage from Portsmouth to Barbadoes beyond the nearest limit required by the Act of 12th of Queen Anne, but even considerably within the same.’ They would not give him the necessary certificate, though they were of opinion that he was entitled to be paid the full reward.

Harrison was now becoming old and feeble. He had attained the age of seventy-four. He had spent forty long years in working

at the chronometers. He was losing his eyesight, and could not afford to wait much longer.

Full little knowest thou, who hast not tried,
 What hell it is in suing long to bide ;
 To lose good days, that might be better spent ;
 To waste long nights in pensive discontent ;
 To spend to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
 To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow.

But Harrison had not lost his spirit. On May 30, 1765, he addressed another remonstrance to the Board, containing much stronger language than he had up to this time used. 'I cannot help thinking,' he said, 'but I am extremely ill-used by gentlemen who I might have expected a different treatment from ; for if the Act of the 12th of Queen Anne be deficient, why have I so long been encouraged under it, in order to bring my invention to perfection ? And, after the completion, why was my son sent twice to the West Indies ? Had it been said to my son, when he received the last instruction, "There will, in case you succeed, be a new Act on your return, in order to lay you under new restrictions, which were not thought of in the Act of the 12th of Queen Anne"—I say, had this been the case I might have expected some such treatment as I now meet with.

'It must be owned that my case is very hard ; but I hope I am the first, and for my country's sake I hope I shall be the last, that suffers by pinning my faith upon an English Act of Parliament. Had I received my just reward—for certainly it may be so called after forty years' close application of the talent which it has pleased God to give me—then my invention would have taken the course which all improvements in this world do ; that is, I must have instructed workmen in its principles and execution, which I should have been glad of an opportunity of doing. But how widely this is different from what is now proposed, viz. for me to instruct people that I know nothing of, and such as may know nothing of mechanics ; and, if I do not make them understand to their satisfaction, I may then have nothing !

'Hard fate indeed to me, but still harder to the world, which may be deprived of this my invention, which must be the case, except by my open and free manner in describing all the principles of it to gentlemen and noblemen who almost at all times have had free recourse to my instruments. And if any of these workmen have been so ingenious as to have got my invention, how far you may please to reward them for their piracy must be left for you to determine ; and I must set myself down in old age, and thank

God I can be more easy in that I have the conquest, and though I have no reward, than if I had come short of the matter and by some delusion had the reward !'

The Right Honourable the Earl of Egmont was in the chair of the Board of Longitude on the day when this letter was read—June 13, 1765. The Commissioners were somewhat startled by the tone which the inventor had taken. Indeed, they were rather angry. But Mr. Harrison, who was in waiting, was called in. After some rather hot speaking, and after a proposal was made to Harrison which he said he would decline to accede to 'so long as a drop of English blood remained in his body,' he left the room. Matters were at length duly arranged. Another Act of Parliament was passed, appointing the payment of the whole reward of 20,000*l.* to the inventor; one moiety upon discovering the principles of the construction of his chronometers and assigning his four chronometers (one of which was styled a watch) to the use of the public, and the remaining moiety on sufficient proof of the correctness of the chronometers.

Mr. Harrison, accordingly, made over to the Commissioners of Longitude his various timekeepers, and deposited in their hands correct drawings, so that other skilful makers might construct similar chronometers on the same principles. Harrison expressed the greatest readiness to explain his inventions, and to subject them to every required test. Indeed, there was no difficulty in making the chronometers, after the explanations and drawings which Harrison had published. An exact copy of his last watch was made by the ingenious Mr. Kendal, one of Harrison's apprentices. This chronometer was used by Captain Cook during his three years' circumnavigation of the globe, and was found to answer as well as the original. This, as well as Harrison's chronometer, is still to be seen at the Royal Observatory, and both are in a good going condition.

Although Harrison did not obtain the remaining moiety of his reward until 1767, two years after the above-mentioned meeting of the Board, his labours were over, his victory was secured, his prize was won. Notwithstanding his delicacy of health he lived a few years longer. He died in 1776, at his house in Red Lion Square, in his eighty-third year. It may be said of John Harrison that by the invention of his chronometer he conferred an incalculable benefit on science and navigation, and established his claim to be regarded as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind.

S. SMILES.

The Orphan Girl of Lannion.

A BRETON BALLAD.

After the original Text.

IN sixteen hundred and eighty-three
To Lannion came dole and misery.

Mignon, an orphan as good as fair,
Served in the little hostelry there.

One darkling night when the hour was late,
Two travellers rang at the outer gate.

‘ Quick, hostess ! supper, red wine, and food ;
We have money to pay, so that all be good.’

When they had drunken enough and more,
‘ Here is white money to pay the score.

‘ And now shall your little serving-maid come
With her lantern lighted to guide us home.’

‘ Gentles, in all our wide Brittany
There is no man would harm her, so let it be.’

Forth went the maid, full of innocent pride,
Fearless and free, with her light by her side.

.

When they were far on their lonely way,
They began to whisper, and mutter, and say,

‘ Little maid, your face is as fair and bright
As the foam on the wave in the morning light.’

‘ Gentles, I pray you, flatter me not,
It is as God made it—no other, God wot ;

‘ And were it fairer, I tell you true—
Ay, a hundred times fairer—’twere nought to you.’

‘ To judge, little maid, by your sober speech,
You know all that the priests at the school can teach.

‘ To judge from your accents, discreet and mild,
You were bred in the convent cloister, my child !’

‘ No teacher had I, neither priest nor nun,
There was no one to teach me on earth, not one.

But while by my father’s poor hearth I wrought,
God filled me with many a holy thought.’

‘ Set down your lantern and put out the light ;
Here is gold, none can help you, ’tis dead of night.’

‘ Good sirs ! for my brother the young priest’s sake,
If he heard such sayings his heart would break.

.

‘ Oh, plunge me down fathoms deep in the sea,
Of your mercy, rather than this thing be !

‘ Rather than this—’twere a lighter doom—
Oh, bury me quick in a living tomb!’

.

The motherly hostess, sore afraid,
Waited in vain for her little maid.

She watched by the chill hearth’s flickering light
Till the bell tolled twice through the black dead night.

Then cried, ‘ Up, serving-men, sleep no more !
Help ! little maid Mignon lies drowned in gore.’

.

By the cross she lay dead in the dead cold night,
But beside her her lantern was still alight !

THE AUTHOR OF ‘THE EPIC OF HADES.’

The Earth in Meteoric Shadow.

THE occurrence of certain spells of exceptionally cold weather, in February, April, and May, has long been recognised as among the most mysterious of meteorological phenomena. Not in every year, but still so often that the change is recognised by other than scientific observers, the temperature falls from about the 7th to the 12th of February, from about the 10th to the 14th of April, and from about the 10th to the 14th of May. It had been thought sufficiently strange that this should have been noted, as Kaemtz long since pointed out, throughout the whole of Europe; and Erman had been led, by this evidence alone, to ascribe the peculiarity to some extra-terrestrial cause. When it was found that the peculiarity is observable in North America also, the evidence in favour of some cosmical cause for the phenomenon was greatly strengthened. Still there were those, myself among the number, who could not accept the only extra-terrestrial cause which had been assigned, and were disposed to believe that possibly some process usually or ordinarily taking place at the observed times, as, for instance, the breaking up of special ice-fields in February, April, and May, might occasion the lowering of the temperature observed at these seasons. Now, however, evidence has been obtained which seems to show that the cooling in question affects not the northern hemisphere alone but the whole earth, insomuch that the belief seems forced upon us that the cause, whatever it may be, is to be sought outside the earth. And just now, when this explanation of a meteorological phenomenon is suggested, astronomical evidence comes in which seems to show how the lowering of the earth's temperature may be explained—that Adolph Erman, in point of fact, though wrong as regards nearly all the details of his theory, was not so far wrong in the general theory, as had been supposed by some of his critics.

Let us, in the first place, consider the evidence as to the existence of these cold spells.

Theoretically, there should be each year a gradual rise of temperature from about the middle of January to about the middle

of July. We might fairly expect that if the average daily temperature for a great number of years at any given place were observed, the variation of temperature would be found tolerably uniform. Thus for London and its neighbourhood we might expect to find something like that variation of temperature which is indicated in our almanacs (which leave altogether out of account, for some unknown reason, the anomalies we are considering). So that if we represented the average temperature for successive days by an upright line, drawn from a horizontal line indicating the positions of successive days in the year, we might expect the curve passing through the upper extremities of the uprights to have a wave-like form, the crest of the wave lying above the part of the horizontal line corresponding to the middle of July, while the hollow or valley of the wave lay above the part corresponding to the middle of January.

But this is not found to be the case. I have before me as I write a diagram drawn by myself several years ago in illustration of my article on the Climate of Great Britain in the second series of my 'Light Science for Leisure Hours.' I drew a large rectangle, and divided each of its longer sides into 365 parts, to represent the days of the year, and drew through the points of division a series of 365 uprights, on which I marked the mean annual temperatures for the corresponding days, the mean having been derived from Greenwich observations ranging over forty-three years. A connected line was carried then through the 365 extremities of these lines.

The resulting curve is remarkable in many respects. The lowest point occurs in the first half of January (with a singular, though slight, rise of temperature on about the 10th or 11th, between two equal depressions a few days before and after. From the middle of January there is a rapid rise to the beginning of the last week, when there is a sudden sharp fall of temperature to the beginning of February. Then comes a fall which causes one of the most marked depressions in the whole curve, though strangely enough, when a curve is run through the alternations in January and February, so as to leave as much space above as below, the mean temperature for February is found to be above rather than below the average. Still it remains the case that the most marked interruption of the upward rise occurs in February; the greatest depression corresponding to the time from February 10th to February 12th. From February to the beginning of April the rise is tolerably uniform, but from April 10th to the 14th the curve

which had been rising rather sharply descends as sharply, and then ascends again, so that this part of the curve is like the letter **S** placed thus **∩**. Again, the rise is steady or nearly so till the beginning of May, but from the 9th to the 14th of May we have a depression almost exactly like that observed in the second week of April. Thence the rise to about the 29th of June is uniform, though wave-like, *i.e.*, the slope is not constant, but, as we might expect, diminishes as the crest of the wave is approached. In the first week of July the curve is marked by two or three small undulations, which lie nearly in a horizontal direction, instead of indicating the continued rise we might fairly expect at this season. In the last half of July there is a rise to the highest part of the curve, which then begins to fall rather sharply, the fall being less rapid after the 10th of August (instead of more rapid as we might fairly expect). Thence, to the last half of November, there is a tolerably steady fall, but then occurs a rise, making the last two or three days of November and the first week of December considerably warmer than they theoretically should be. After the middle of December there is a very rapid fall in the temperature curve, but a rise occurs in the last week of December somewhat similar to that observed in the last week of November.

The most marked features of the curve are the three cold periods of February, April, and May, and the warm period at the beginning of December.

Let us turn, however, from the south to the north of Great Britain, and see whether the peculiarities noted at Greenwich exist at Edinburgh.

Buchan, in his 'Handy Book of Meteorology,' remarks that the results of all observations hitherto made are unanimous in showing that 'there are certain periods, more or less defined, when the temperature, instead of rising, remains stationary, or retrogrades—instead of falling, stops in its downward course, or rises—and at other times falls, or rises for a few days, at an accelerated speed. I have examined,' he says, 'the temperature of Scotland, for a number of years, and have shown that the following interruptions occur from year to year, with very rare exceptions:—

Six cold periods

1. 7th to 10th February.
2. 11th to 14th April.
3. 9th to 14th May.
4. 29th June to 4th July.
5. 6th to 11th August.
6. 6th to 12th November.

- Three warm periods {
1. 12th to 15th July.
 2. 12th to 15th August.
 3. 3rd to 9th December.

It will be seen that the six most remarkable cold periods, and the chief of the warm periods, are recognisable in Scotland as well as in England.

But on the Continent, also, these anomalies have been clearly recognised. The cold weather which occurs in May is prominent in the weather saws of every country in Europe. Mädler examined the mean temperatures for May, as determined from the Berlin observations for eighty-six years ('*Verhandlung des Vereins zur Beförd. des Gartenbaues*,' 1834), and found a retrogression of temperature amounting to $2\cdot2^{\circ}$ Fahrenheit, from the 11th to the 13th of May—which, be it noticed, is about the time when the most rapid rise of temperature might be expected. Humboldt, in his '*Cosmos*,' speaking of this anomalous cold, says, 'it is much to be desired that this phenomenon, which some have felt inclined to attribute to the melting of ice in the north-east of Europe, should be also investigated in very remote spots, as in America or in the Southern Hemisphere,' which since his day has been accomplished, as we shall presently see.

We have to note also that the peculiarity, besides being observed in widely different places, has been observed at widely different times. Indeed, perhaps the most remarkable circumstance about these cold spells is that not only their occurrence, but the time of their occurrence, should have been noted by the unscientific, not usually ready to compare the weather and seasonal changes of one year (at least, in details) with those of another. Thus the three cold days of April, which before the change of style came early in the month (and were, in fact, for two or three centuries practically coincident with the first three days of the month), have been long known in Scotland and the north of England as the 'borrowing days'—that is, the days in reference to which there had been a borrowing, according to an old saying, embodied in the following doggrel lines:—

March borrows from April
 Three days, and they are ill;
 The first of them is wan and weat,
 The second it is snaw and sleet,

The third of them is a peet-a-bane,
And freezes the wee bird's neb tae stane.¹

It is hardly necessary to remark that a phenomenon which thus attracts general attention, and is also capable of being verified by scientific observation, must be at once marked and very regular in its recurrence. Humboldt mentions that the cold days of May were recognised by the unlearned, and speaks of them as the three 'ill-named days' of May, corresponding with the days of St. Mamert (May 11), St. Pancras (May 12), and St. Servatius (May 13).

With reference to the cold days of February, the evidence is even more remarkable, as well for wideness of distribution in space, as for the length of time during which the phenomenon has been noticed. M. St. Claire Deville, searching meteorological records for evidence respecting the cold week in February (which he had found to be noted throughout Europe and in America), actually found that it had been noted in observations by the pupils of Galileo. These observations extend from 1655 to 1670, and show that the minimum temperature was reached at that time on or about February 12. Mr. Russell, Government Astronomer at Sydney, has pointed out that the same peculiarity is observable in Australian registers.

¹ In the Glossary of Scotch Words and Phrases these lines are given :—

'Said March to April
Gie me three hoggs upon yon hill ;
And in the space of days three,
I'll find a way to gar them dee.
The first a bitter blast did blaw,
The second it was sleet and snaw,
The third it cam sae full a freeze
The wee bird's neb they stack to the trees ;
But when the days were past and gane
The three puir hoggs cam hirplin hame.'

But the following is probably a more perfect version of the doggrel poem :—

'March said to Aperill
I see three hogs upon a hill :
But lend your first three days to me,
And I'll be bound to gar them dee.
The first it shall be wind and weet,
The next it shall be snaw and sleet,
The third it shall be sic a freeze
Shall gar the birds stick to the trees,
But when the borrowed days were gane,
The three silly hogs cam hirplin' hame.'

Here the reference to the borrowing is clearer, for in the former version not days but hogs were borrowed. At the date to which the later poem is usually referred the three cold days of April were called April 1, 2, and 3, so that being cold and bleak they might well be regarded as borrowed by March.

It was natural that in searching for a cause of these remarkable anomalies of temperature, science should have been led to look outside the earth. Forty-three years have now passed since Adolph Erman threw out, in the Poggendorf 'Annalen,' the idea that the sun's conjunction with the August meteors on February 7 and with the November meteors on May 12, might explain the cold spells which occur in February and May. He supposed that the ring of meteors through which the earth passes in August is smaller than the earth's orbit, so that, as the plane of the ring cuts the plane of the earth's orbit in a straight line, passing through the sun, and extending on one side to the earth's place on or about August 11, this line must extend on the opposite side to the place occupied by the earth on or about February 7, passing through the meteors before reaching the earth. The meteor ring, according to this view, would lie between the earth and the sun on or about February 7, and the earth being in their shadow would be to a certain extent chilled. So with the November meteors. The earth would pass into their shadow, according to this ingenious theory, on or about May 11 or 12. Hence the 'cold days in May.'

The theory is very ingenious, and has the advantage of being easily understood. It has therefore been quoted again and again, by persons unfamiliar with astronomy. It has done duty in newspaper science almost every year since it was first propounded. Even so late as 1879, M. de Fonvielle, editor of 'La Nature,' presented it, not as a doubtful theory, but (after the manner which is characteristic, and I cannot but think a characteristic defect of French popular science teaching) as a known fact, which his readers were to accept because he said it—*Je vous le dis*—moi, he seems to say: 'The chilliness is due to the fact that the earth passes behind a ring of asteroids, which absorbs a portion of the sun's warmth, due to us while he remains above the horizon. The temperature does not resume its ascensional movement until the annual rotation has carried our earth from the shadow of the multitude of small planets which is always projected on the same point of our orbit.'

Now, when Erman first advanced this theory, there seemed to be considerable evidence in its favour, and there were no known objections, at least of any great weight, against it. The case is very different now. Erman's theory, as he presented it, is absolutely untenable by anyone acquainted with what has been learned respecting the August and November meteor systems since 1866

The theory requires that the August and November meteor systems should pass between the earth's orbit and the sun, where they cross the plane of that orbit opposite the crossing places through which the earth herself passes on August 11 and on November 13. But we know now the precise form of each system, and we find that the other crossing-place of the November system lies some nineteen times farther from the sun than the earth's orbit, while the August system also crosses the plane of the earth's orbit much farther away than the earth travels from the sun. In other words, although rays from the sun towards the earth on or about February 7 and again on or about May 12 do undoubtedly fall upon the August and November meteor systems, they so fall not on their way to the earth, as Erman supposed, but long after they have passed the earth. As I wrote in 'Knowledge' for May 26, 1882: 'To charge the August or the November system with robbing our earth of a portion of its supplies of solar heat is to act like the wolf in the fable, who accused the lamb of troubling the stream, though the stream flowed from the wolf towards the lamb.' Our earth may intercept some of the supplies of solar light and heat passing out towards the November and August meteor systems, but assuredly neither of these systems can cut off any of the supplies sent out to the earth.

It is noteworthy, indeed, and, I think, surprising, how little the topography, so to speak, of the August and November meteor systems seems to be understood even by authors who, though writing popularly, are supposed yet to understand what they are writing about, and, in fact, to have no other object in writing but to explain to others what they thoroughly understand themselves. For instance, in Guillemin's '*Le Ciel*,' and in the English translation edited by Mr. Lockyer, there was given a stupendously impossible theory of the November and August meteor showers as produced by a single ring of meteors; and a picture was presented, in which this single ring was shown cutting the earth's orbit in two places, though it was perfectly well known, long before the discoveries of 1866 and following years, that both meteor systems cut the earth's path at an angle. The idea of the August meteors crossing the plane of the earth's orbit at a sharp angle (or, indeed, at any angle) when the earth is in August, and then crossing the same plane (necessarily in a contrary direction) at the place occupied by the earth only three months later, is, of course, outrageously absurd. Yet here two professed teachers of the general public—rather condescending teachers too—not

only describe this impossible movement, but even endeavour to picture it. If they had attempted to show it 'in elevation' as well as 'in plan,' they could not have failed, I should imagine, to recognise its absurdity; but without that, the absurdity should have been obvious.

To return to Erman's theory, it by no means follows from the disproof of the theory as advanced, that the anomalous falls of temperature in February, April, and May, are not due to the interposition of flights of meteors.

Yet the objections even to the general theory are weighty. If meteor streams lying between the earth and the sun diminished our supply of heat, we should expect that some among them would be visible upon the sun's face at those times, when duly magnified by powerful telescopes. A distant flight might, indeed, escape without any of its individual members being detected. But even then one would expect a measurable decrease of the sun's brightness, and hitherto nothing of this sort has been recorded by scientific observers.

But, after all, as I pointed out in the paper above referred to ('Knowledge' for May 26, 1882), the terrestrial test of Erman's theory is the best. If meteoric bodies come between the earth and sun at any time, in such numbers as to make us feel cold in their shadow, they must cool the whole earth, not England, or Europe, or the northern hemisphere. 'If, then,' I wrote at that time, 'on a careful comparison of the mean daily temperature at observatories all over the earth, it is found that the cold snaps of February, April, and May are everywhere to be recognised, then it must be at least admitted that the cause of the peculiarity is to be sought outside the earth herself.'

This, which, when I wrote those lines, seemed to me unlikely, has now happened. There seems no reason to doubt that the relatively cool weather of February in the southern hemisphere (I say relatively because, of course, February belongs to the warmest part of the southern year, corresponding to our August) is not coincident by a mere accident with the cold weather of our northern February. And the same with the cold days of April and May.

We seem obliged, then, to look for some cosmical cause of the anomalous falls in the earth's temperature; and as it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive any cause which could directly affect the sun's temperature on special days of the terrestrial year, we seem naturally led to infer that somewhere between the earth

and the sun there lies, either constantly or usually, something of the nature of a cloud which intercepts a portion of the sun's light and heat. If we consider for a moment what any special part of the earth's year means, we seem forced to this conclusion. The 9th of February, for instance, is the time when, in her course around the sun, the earth arrives at a particular part of her path; her coming there can in no way affect the sun's light and heat, which therefore cannot be diminished at that date (systematically) any more than at any other time. Yet the heat received by the earth when she gets there, *is* less; hence it seems to follow inevitably that the earth there passes through a region where less heat (and therefore less light) is received, because of some shadow-throwing matter.

Now, when Erman enunciated his theory of the interposition of meteoric streams, it was natural that such meteor systems as those which produce the August and November showers should be regarded as the shadow-throwing matter. Those were the only important meteor systems recognised, and there was no known reason for supposing that many such systems exist.

But at present our ideas about the meteoric components of the solar system are very different. While we know certainly that neither the August nor the November system can throw the earth into shadow in February and May, we know just as certainly that there are meteor systems—myriads, indeed, of meteor systems—which are much better fitted to cloud the solar rays than are those two.

In the first place, we know that the August and November systems are simply those two meteor streams, or incomplete rings of meteors—among several hundred such systems through which the earth passes—which chance to be so situated as to produce the most conspicuous and remarkable star-showers. There are doubtless many among the hundreds of others which are far more important numerically, and as regards the size of their individual components, than are these two. But others we merely skirt, or we have never fairly gauged, because the earth has not yet chanced to pass through their richer portions. These two the earth has passed through more centrally (though we do not even yet know that the earth has passed through the centre of either), and it has also happened that the earth has passed through those parts of these systems which are most richly strewn with meteors—the gemmed region of the meteor-ring—though, again, we do not yet know the true wealth of either system. To suppose that

those of which we know only by passage through their outskirts are of inferior wealth, and that the two we do know are necessarily the richest, is to suppose what, according to the laws of probability, is exceedingly unlikely.

But we also know that the earth can pass through, centrally or skirtingly, but a very minute proportion of the meteor systems which really exist in the solar domain. Picture the earth's path around the sun as what it really is, a mere thread-like ring of space around the sun, having a circular cross-section with a diameter of less than 8,000 miles (a mere nothing), while the diameter of the ring itself is no less than 185,000,000 miles: we then see how exceedingly minute is the space swept each year by the earth, in comparison with the sun's domain even to the earth's distance, and still less with the entire spherical region enclosed within the orbit of Neptune. If we lived on another planet—Venus, for example—we should become aware, *there* also, of multitudes of meteor systems, not one of which the earth passes through. Another set of entirely new meteor systems would come within our ken if we transferred our abode to Mercury or to Mars, or to any of the giant planets which travel outside the zone of asteroids. But even all the planets together do not actually traverse (in the way essential to meteoric encounter), do not, as it were, sweep through, more than a very minute portion of the solar domain. Assuming within the orbit of the earth the same degree of meteoric wealth that the earth encounters in each of her annual circlings, we should have to believe in millions—nay, in millions of millions—of meteoric systems, passing through the region of space lying nearer to the sun than the earth's orbit.

But even this is far from being all. We have every reason to believe, in fact it may be said to have been to all intents and purposes demonstrated, that the wealth of meteoric distribution increases greatly within the earth's orbit, increases much more rapidly within the orbit of Venus, still more rapidly within the orbit of Mercury, and most rapidly of all in the sun's immediate neighbourhood. The proof of this has, of course, not been derived directly from meteoric observation, for we can become directly conscious of no meteor systems but those through which the earth actually passes, nor even of these save by those occasional transits through them during which a few thousands of individual meteors are, as it were, *swept out of them* by the onward-rushing earth. Yet by reasoning of obvious force, the

existence of multitudinous meteor systems, growing ever more numerous and ever richer, towards the sun's neighbourhood, has been clearly established. It has been found, first, that meteor systems follow in the course of comets; it has next been shown that when the earth passes through the track of a comet meteoric bodies in great numbers are encountered; it may be inferred then, first, that every meteor system follows either a comet now existing or one which, like Biela's, has been dissipated by processes whose nature is not as yet known;¹ and, secondly, that every existing comet is followed by a train of meteors (which we may well believe to be in some degree proportional, in wealth of distribution and as respects the size of its components, to the comet with which it is associated). Now it is further found that the number of cometic paths increases rapidly as we approach the sun; and not only is the rate of increase rapid, but this rate is itself increasing as the sun is approached; so that whatever the wealth of cometic, and therefore of meteoric distribution, at the earth's distance from the sun, the wealth of such distribution close by the sun is enormously greater.

But we have other evidence on this point which, though perhaps by itself it might not be very weighty, amounts almost to demonstration when regarded as interpreting, and also as interpreted by, the evidence we have just been dealing with.

The solar corona might in former days have been regarded as in no way connected with the subject we are considering; for in former days, despite the really perfect evidence already existing to show that the corona belongs to the sun, many students of astronomy seemed to regard it as a part of scientific caution to close their eyes to the evidence, and regard as at least tenable the hypothesis that the corona may be a lunar or a terrestrial, or even a merely optical phenomenon. But within the last ten or twelve years the corona has been recognised by all for what (as

¹ It so happens that one of the most remarkable meteoric showers ever seen, the only one which was ever predicted before it had been recognised by annual star-showers, was due to meteoric bodies following in the track of a comet already dissipated, viz. Biela's (or Gambart's, as it is more properly called). This comet, which was divided into two in 1846, was looked for in vain in 1866, and when next due in 1872; but because then it should have passed the earth's track (which it chances nearly to cross) shortly before the earth arrived near the passing place, some students of astronomy (I was one of them, and, I believe, the first) suggested that in all probability when the earth arrived at that part of her orbit about November 27 there would be a display of meteors, radiating (because following the comet) from a part of the star sphere near the feet of Andromeda; and such a display was seen (one of the richest star-showers of the century numerically) on the night of November 27, and with the predicted 'radiant point.'

I pointed out in 1869) it might have been known to be centuries ago—a distinctly solar appendage. So understood, however, the corona's nature yet remained to be interpreted. To some it appeared as a sort of solar atmosphere, to others as a magnified aurora, while yet others regarded it as due to the constant emission of matter from the sun under the action of repulsive forces akin to those by which the tails of comets are supposed to be produced.

I pointed out long since, and with each succeeding year the evidence for that view has become clearer and more decisive, that whatever other theory of the corona we may accept, we cannot reject the belief that a part at least of the coronal light is due to meteoric matter travelling around the sun in streams and systems like those which produce the August and November star showers, but much more closely aggregated. When we take into account the much greater wealth of meteoric matter near the sun, that such matter is very much more brilliantly illuminated than meteoric matter at our earth's distance, while a portion of it is in all probability rendered self-luminous, if not actually vaporised under the sun's heat, we see that even if no such phenomenon as a total eclipse of the sun had ever been seen, one could predict that when the sun's light was intercepted by an extra-terrestrial body like the moon, a glory of light such as the solar corona would be seen around him. Those multitudinous meteoric streams in his neighbourhood, lit up by a splendour compared with which that of our sun at noon is almost as darkness, could not fail to be conspicuous around the globe of the sun, so soon as his own splendour was shielded from us by the interposed body of the moon. As I wrote in my treatise on the sun in 1870, before the true nature of the corona had been generally recognised, so I write now when none are in doubt as to the corona being a solar and not a lunar or terrestrial appendage—'we have two distinct lines of argument: we are led by the consideration of the phenomena actually presented by the corona to the conclusion that multitudes of bodies too minute to be separately visible exist around the sun; while we are led by the consideration of what we know respecting multitudes of minute bodies actually travelling around the sun, to the conclusion that a corona or aureole of light would be seen around him during total eclipse.' This being so, we cannot hesitate to accept, as at least partially explaining the phenomena of the solar corona, the theory that its lustre is in great part due to streams and systems of

meteoric bodies travelling around the sun in his immediate neighbourhood.

But we have next to notice a peculiarity of the corona which can only be explained as due to meteoric streams, and which, considered in connection with what we have already learned, seems at once to point to a probable and, if demonstrated, a most interesting explanation of the anomalous temperature changes. I refer to the existence of certain rays or streamers, as they have been called (rather from their appearance than from anything which has been proved respecting their nature), extending from the eclipsed body of the sun as the brighter and farthest reaching portions of the solar corona.

During the total eclipse of July 1878 Professor Cleveland Abbe, observing the eclipse from a station on Pike's Peak (not at the summit, but high above the sea level), was able to trace a long, seemingly radial streamer to a distance of no less than six diameters of the sun, or about five million miles from the sun's disc. Four other rays were visible extending not quite so far, but the shortest of them reach fully two million miles from the edge of the sun, assuming its length to lie at right angles to the line of sight; if, which is far more probable, its length was inclined to that line at an acute angle we must adopt a higher estimate.

Now these rays had well-defined edges, and their brighter portions were not by any means radial extensions from the sun. Again, while two grew narrower with increased distance from the sun, the other two (which were apparently the prolongations of the former, on the opposite side of the sun) grew broader with increase of distance. It seems quite impossible to explain these streamers as formed of matter extending outwards from the sun as from a centre.

Professor Cleveland Abbe, himself, came very quickly to the conclusion that these objects were meteor systems. 'Meteor streams!' he said, 'there is the key to the solution: not such meteors as some suppose to be falling into the sun daily, but the grand streams of meteors that cause the numerous shooting stars of August and November, and of the existence of which there is indubitable proof. These streams consist of fine particles or pieces, each a long way from its neighbour, but all rushing along in parallel orbits about the sun (that is, all belonging to any given system) like the falling drops of rain in a thunder-shower. Such a stream as the August meteor system, when far beyond the sun, but still lighted up by it, would reflect to us a faint uniform

light precisely like that of these rays. If one end of the stream were further from us than the other, the effect of the perspective would be to produce a tapering or wedge-shaped appearance. In some other part of our orbit, or with the meteor stream in some other part of its orbit, the perspective might vanish and the two ends appear of the same width. In this way,' Mr. Abbe proceeds, 'we shall undoubtedly be able to explain the very numerous historical and memorable occasions on which flaming coronas, swords, comets, &c., seen in the sky during a total eclipse, have been regarded by the superstitious as divine omens.'

Now here it must be noted that while all this may be true of some meteor systems, it is assuredly not true either of the August meteor system or of the November one. Neither of these systems could be discernible at all during any total eclipse of the sun; for the simple reason that neither is rich enough in meteoric matter nor illuminated with sufficient brilliancy by the sun. We can be certain that *such* meteor systems could not be seen during a total eclipse, if we take into account a simple consideration which Mr. Abbe seems to have entirely overlooked. If a meteor system like the November system, which has its greater part outside the orbit of the earth, could be seen at all it would be seen during the darkness of midnight. Let me be understood. I do not mean that on every night, or even at any given season in each year, we might expect to see the November or August meteors. But it is certain from the known position and movements of these systems, that on many occasions during the last century (to go no further back) they should have been seen far more conspicuously on the midnight sky—that is on the side of the stellar sphere opposite to the sun—than they ever could be seen during total eclipse. In one case we are nearer to them by a whole diameter of the earth's orbit (or 185,000,000 miles); they are illuminated fully like planets in opposition, and they are on a dark background upon which stars down to the sixth or seventh magnitude are visible to the naked eye. In the other case, we look at them athwart the place of the sun, and on a sky which, though it seems dark by comparison with the brightness of mid-day, is yet very different indeed from the dark sky of midnight (as is shown by the circumstance that during the darkest total eclipse of the sun no third magnitude star has ever been seen, and only the brightest stars of the second magnitude). Moreover, during a total eclipse it is only on parts of the sky remote from the sun that stars are seen; close to the sun the

brightness of the corona hides the stars from view. But it is precisely in this brighter portion of the sky during total eclipses that these streamers have been most favourably seen.

It is absolutely certain, in point of fact, that if these streamers are due to meteors, of which I have for my own part very little doubt, the systems to which the meteors belong are close to the sun where we see the streamers. The mere fact that the streamers are bright near the sun's place proves this. Imagine a meteor system at the earth's distance from the sun, seen athwart the sun's place during a total eclipse. Then it is true that from the parts of the system lying apparently nearest the sun, the greatest quantity of light would be reflected towards us, but the diminution in the quantity of light would be very slight, and would be more than compensated by the darkening of the sky with increasing distance from the central and brighter parts of the corona. Apart from this, the line of sight would be directed through a longer range of meteors, the greater the distance of any part observed from the sun's place. A streamer produced in this way would be more conspicuous the farther the part observed was from the sun. The reverse, however, is the case, and in such marked degree that no streamer can be traced at all to a distance of more than five or six diameters of the sun from him. In this we have proof positive, that there is a marked falling off in the illumination of the meteor stream on either side of the sun's place; wherefore (not as a doubtful influence, but with absolute certainty) the parts thus much more faintly illuminated are much farther from the sun.

No other argument should be necessary, but so slowly are considerations of this kind attended to, that it may be as well to strengthen the evidence which, rightly apprehended, is irresistible. Here, then, is another argument:—

If meteor systems lying as far as the earth's orbit from the sun, or even no farther from him than the orbits of Venus or Mercury, could be seen during total eclipse, the chances would be greatly in favour of such a system being seen as a thwart streak not passing directly (in appearance) behind the sun's disc, but lying above or below or on either side of that disc. The meteor stream might be compared to the orbit of a planet, except that all the planets have orbits nearly in the same plane as the earth's, while the meteor systems cross the plane of the earth's orbit at all possible angles. Now even in the case of the planets Venus and Mercury, the orbits, though lying not far from the plane of

the earth's path, lie *always, except for a few days in December and June, in the case of Venus, and in November and May, in the case of Mercury*, above or below the sun's disc as seen from the earth. So that nearly always if there were a meteor system travelling in the track of Venus or Mercury, we should see that system during eclipse (if at all) passing clear of the disc of the sun though near it. In the case of the meteor systems, we should see the earth stream most of the time (if we saw it at all) passing far away from the disc of the eclipsed sun. Take, for instance, the August and November systems. These, if visible at all, would only be seen as coronal streamers on or about February 7 and May 12; at other times they would be seen to lie far from the solar disc.

The fact, then, that during solar eclipses these meteor systems (if thus we are to explain the coronal streamers) seem nearly radial to the solar disc, is another proof, though the other was sufficient, that the part of the meteor stream producing the observed light is in each case very close indeed to the sun.

Now it is clear that when we see a meteor stream as a radial, or rather diametral streak athwart the sun's place, the brightest part of the stream as so seen must lie really behind the sun. It *looks* like a double projection, or rather two projections, one on each side of the sun, but it is manifestly nothing of the sort, but a tract of illuminated matter extending across the space behind the sun.

We cannot, then, believe, as some do, that the earth can ever come exactly opposite a streamer or projection of meteoric matter extending radially from the sun, simply because the position is demonstrably impossible. But this does not necessarily invalidate the meteoric explanation of the cold days in February, April, and May. It would doubtless be easier to believe in the effective shadows of meteors, if they could lie lengthwise along the space between the earth and the sun. But if two or three meteor streams should chance to lie between the earth and sun, not lengthwise but athwart, their effect in shading the earth might be quite sufficient to produce the fall of two or three degrees in temperature observed during the cold spells.

For it must be observed that the fall of temperature, if caused by meteoric interposition, would be due, not to the diminution of the sun's outpour of heat at any particular moment, but to the entire loss of heat during his passage past the interposed meteor stream, and that might last two or three days, affecting the entire

earth, not only those places where day was in progress. The actual supply of heat at any moment would of course only be diminished where the sun was shining; but even where the sun was not shining the effects of the diminution in the total terrestrial supply would presently be felt.

Let us make a rough calculation, however, to see whether the quantitative loss of heat—during, say, three days of the interposition of a meteor stream—could produce any measurable effect.

Suppose a meteor stream to be a million miles through, in the direction towards the sun (from the earth), and to be so broad, supposed to be seen edgewise, as to cover the whole breadth of the sun during three days of the earth's motion in her orbit. Then the region of meteor stream space actually intercepted between the earth and the sun would obviously be a frustum of a cone, having the sun at its base, and the earth near its apex. But we need not trouble ourselves to consider this region as other than a cylinder, a million miles high. Supposing it to be near the sun (as we *must* consider any meteor system visible during a total eclipse to be), we may set the diameter of its base at about 800,000 miles; whence it follows that its volume would be about 500,000,000,000,000,000 cubic miles. If we assume that there is but one meteor, one inch in diameter, in every 5 cubic miles, it would follow that at each instant during the three days' passage there would be interposed between the earth and the sun no less than 100,000,000,000,000,000 members of that meteoric system, each one inch in diameter. Being so near to the sun, these meteors would each hide from the earth a space equal to a circle-inch (that is, a circle an inch in diameter) of his surface, from our earth's view. Now, in a circle-mile there are nearly 1,000,000,000 circle-inches. Hence it follows that, apart from the very few cases in which these widely scattered one-inch meteors would be in or very near the same line of sight, they would hide from view a space equal to 100,000,000 circle-miles, or a space equal to that which would be hidden by a planet 10,000 miles in diameter, close to the sun. This would suffice to cut off about a 7,000th part of his light and heat.

Now from the known wealth and extent of such systems as the August and November meteor streams (the latter of which follows in the train of a comet so small as to require a telescope to make it visible) and the enormous probability that others far richer exist in the space between the sun and the earth's orbit, we

might safely infer that there are in the sun's neighbourhood many meteoric systems far richer than the one we have conceived above. Again, every system of meteors circling around the sun aggregates as its members approach the sun, and segregates as they recede from him, so that we may readily believe in a far greater wealth of meteoric distribution in a flight of meteors passing its perihelion, than the above suppositions involve. Yet again, if we take into account the minute but more numerous components of a meteoric stream, we should have to admit a far more effective interruption of the sun's light than we have considered above. For instance, if we suppose that besides a meteor one inch in diameter in the space of five cubic miles, there were a million tiny bodies whose combined mass would only make up such another one-inch meteor, we should have to assign to these million tiny bodies, not the same light-obstructive effect as the one-inch meteor produced, though their mass is only equal to it, but an effect no less than one hundred times greater.¹ So that by merely supposing two sphere inches of matter, one as a single globe, the other distributed in tiny grains each a hundredth of an inch in diameter, throughout five *cubic miles* of space, in a system having the extent we have considered above, we should have not a 7,000th part but more than a 70th of the sun's light and heat obstructed. This if continued for three days would correspond in quantity to the cutting off of the sun's entire supply of light and heat during more than one hour. The effects of such a sun-shadowing, even though distributed over three days, could not fail to be recognisable.

It should be added that the mere visibility of a meteor system during total solar eclipse implies that it must be many times more richly aggregated than any meteor system encountered by the earth,—shows in fact, that the meteor systems so seen must be at least as rich as we have supposed in the above reasoning.

Suppose, now, that two or three meteor systems chanced to be interposed in the way supposed above. Then the effects deduced would be doubled or tripled; and not merely a recognisable, but a marked loss of solar heat would ensue. If, for instance, it so chanced that there were one meteor stream lying in or near the plane of the earth's orbit and close to the sun, while a little

¹ Each would have a diameter of only one-hundredth of the diameter of the larger, and its diameter being one hundred times as large as theirs it would hide a space on the sun's surface ten thousand times as great as the space hidden by each of the others; but as there are a million of them they would collectively hide a space one hundred times as large.

farther away from him there were another, crossing the plane of the earth's orbit at a considerable angle,—then, as the earth in her motion came behind the former, she would be several days in its shadow. Suppose now that in the course of this time she came behind the second or thwart system also. Then for a day or two, or perhaps three, she would be in the shadow of both these meteor systems. We are not by any means speaking wildly, but most moderately, in saying that small and widely scattered though the individual meteors might be, the effect of their interposition could hardly fail to be recognisable. Nay, oddly enough, the smaller the meteors were individually (with a distribution of a given quantity of meteoric matter per cubic mile) the greater would be the effect of their interposition.

But it may be said, if there are meteoric streams such as these, capable of casting an effective shadow on the earth, these streams ought to be recognisable during total eclipse. Of course, individual meteors could not possibly be seen. A meteoric mass ten miles in diameter, close to the sun's surface, would be utterly invisible in the most powerful telescope ever yet made by man. What, then, would be the chance of seeing bodies whose diameters (even those of the largest of them) would be measurable by inches? But if a meteoric stream can cut off a measurable or recognisable quantity of solar heat, it must of necessity (however dark its substance may be) reflect a measurable or recognisable quantity of sunlight, when favourably placed for observation. Is there any evidence to show that this has happened in the case of the meteoric streams we have been considering above?

When should they be looked for? Manifestly, during eclipses occurring at the time when the earth is opposite, or nearly opposite, the part of her orbit on which such meteor streams cast their shadows. For instance, if the fall of temperature on or about February 7 is caused by the interposition of one or more meteor systems, then, during an eclipse occurring near August 11, or within two or three weeks on either side of that date, we should see meteoric streamers extending apparently diametrically from the sun (that is, forming opposite radiations really due to their lying behind the sun).

Now in the eclipse of July 28, 1851, Airy, the Astronomer Royal, noticed that the corona looked like a radiated cloud behind the moon. In the eclipse of July 29, 1878 (more favourably seen than any other has ever been) a bar of light was seen forming two radiations along the ecliptic, while athwart was

another stream of light (both probably being meteoric streams). In the eclipse of August 7, 1869, four long radial streams were traced by General Myer to a distance of two or three diameters of the lunar disc. (He calls them straight, massive, silvery rays, seeming distinct and separate from each other, the whole spectacle showing as upon a background of diffused rose-coloured light.) In the eclipse of August 18, 1868, the shape of the corona resembled what was seen during the eclipse of July 29, 1878, nearly enough to correspond with the difference of time.

In fine, so far as the pictures and other evidence in my possession enable me to judge,¹ all that is known about that part of the meteor-stream region beyond the sun as seen during eclipses in July and August, and therefore lying between the earth and sun in January and February, corresponds precisely with what we should expect if the cold spell of February is due to the earth's passage through the shadows of meteor streams at that time. It so happens that we have no good pictures of total eclipses in October (corresponding to the April cold spell) or in November (corresponding to the cold days in May). I have very little doubt that when such eclipses come to be observed, similar appearances will present themselves.

It will form an interesting subject of study during future solar eclipses to determine how far the observed meteoric structure of the corona corresponds with the variations of the earth's mean temperature during the year,—in other words, to determine the relative density of the meteor shadows in different months and in different days. One cannot but regret the more seriously, that owing to unwillingness to recognise the clearest mathematical evidence as to the real nature of the corona, the valuable opportunities for observation during the last quarter of a century were frittered away in absolutely unnecessary attempts to prove the corona to be what mathematical considerations had already shown that it is,—a solar appendage.

R. A. PROCTOR.

¹ For illustrations of the corona as seen on these occasions the reader is referred to my treatise on the Sun. This particular point is to be fully discussed with abundant illustrations during the next few weeks in the pages of *Knowledge*.

The Norway Fjords.

ON June 30, 1881, we sailed from Southampton Water in a steam yacht to spend ten weeks in the Norway Fjords—Fjords or Friths, for the word is the same. The Scandinavian children of the sea carried their favourite names with them. Frith is Fjord; our Cumberland Scale *Force* would be called Scale Foss between the North Cape and the Baltic. The yacht was spacious; over 300 tons. Cabins, equipments, engines, captain, steward, crew the best of their kind. Our party was small; only four in all. My friend whose guest I was, and whom I shall call X—, two ladies, and myself. X— had furnished himself with such knowledge as was attainable in London, for the scenes which we were to explore. He had studied Norse. He could speak it: he could understand and be understood. He was a sportsman, but a sportsman only as subsidiary to more rational occupations. He was going to Norway to catch salmonidæ: not, however, to catch them only, but to study the varieties of that most complicated order of fish. He was going also to geologise and to botanise, to examine rocks and rivers and glaciers and flowers; while all of us were meaning to acquaint ourselves as far as we could with the human specimens still to be found in the crater of the old volcano from which those ship-loads of murdering ‘Danes’ poured out ten centuries ago to change the face of Europe.

And to see Norway, the real Norway, within moderate compass of time is possible only with such means as a steam yacht provides. There are great lines of road in Norway along the practicable routes, but very few *are* practicable; nine-tenths of the country, and the most interesting parts, are so walled off by mountains, are so entrenched among the fjords, as to be for ever unapproachable by land, while the water highways lead everywhere—magnificent canals, fashioned by the elemental forces, who can say how or when?

From the west coast there run inland with a general easterly direction ten or twelve main channels of sea, penetrating from fifty to a hundred miles into the very heart of the Northern Peninsula. They are of vast depth, and from half a mile to

two miles broad. The mountains rise on both sides sheer from the water's edge; the lower ranges densely timbered with pine and birch and alder; above these belts of forest soar ranges of lofty peaks, five or six thousand feet up, the snow lying thick upon them in the midst of summer, glaciers oozing down the gorges, like cataracts arrested in their fall by the Frost Enchanter, motionless, yet with the form of motion. From the snow, from the ice when the glaciers reach a warmer level, melt streams which swell at noon, as the sun grows hot, descend in never-ending waterfalls, cascade upon cascade, through the ravines which they have cut for themselves in millions of years. In the evening they dwindle away, and at night fall silent as the frost resumes its power.

From the great central fjords branches strike out right and left, some mere inlets ending after a few miles, some channels which connect one fjord with another. The surface of Norway, as it is shown flat upon a chart, is lined and intersected by these waterways as the surface of England is by railways. The scenery, though for ever changing, changes like the pattern of a kaleidoscope, the same materials readjusted in varying combinations; the same rivers of sea-water, the same mountain walls, the same ice and snow on the summits, the same never-ending pines and birches, with an emerald carpet between the stems where the universal whortleberry hides the stones under the most brilliant green. The short fjords and the large are identical in general features, save that, lying at right angles to the prevailing winds, the surface of these lateral waters is usually undisturbed by a single ripple; the clouds may be racing over the high ridges, but down below no breath can reach. Hence the light is undispersed. The eye, instead of meeting anywhere with white water, sees only rocks, woods, and cataracts reversed as in a looking-glass. This extreme stillness, and the optical results of it, are the cause, I suppose, of the gloom of Norwegian landscape-painting.

How these fjords were formed is, I believe, as yet undetermined. Water has furrowed the surface of the globe into many a singular shape; water, we are told, cut out the long gorge below Niagara; but water, acting as we now know it, scarcely scooped out of the hardest known rock these multitudinous fissures so uniform in character between walls which pierce the higher strata of the clouds, between cliffs which in some places rise, as in the Geiranger, perpendicular for a thousand feet; the fjords themselves of such extraordinary depth, and deepest always when furthest

from the sea. Where they enter the Atlantic, there is bottom generally in a hundred fathoms. In the Sogne, a hundred miles inland, you find 700 fathoms. Rivers cutting their way through rock and soil could never have achieved such work as this. Ice is a mighty thaumaturgist, and ice has been busy enough in Norway. The fjords were once filled with ice up to a certain level; the level to which it rose can be traced on the sharp angles ground off the rounded stone, and the scores of the glacier plane on the polished slabs of gneiss or granite. But at some hundreds of feet above the present water line the ice action ends, and cliffs and crags are scarred and angular and weather-splintered to where they are lost in the eternal snow. The vast moraines which occasionally block the valleys tell the same story. The largest that I saw was between four and five hundred feet high, and we have to account for chasms which, if we add the depth of the water to the height of the mountains above it, are 9,000 feet from the bottom to the mountain crest.

The appearance of Norway is precisely what it would have been if the surface had cracked when cooling into a thousand fissures, longitudinal and diagonal, if these fissures had at one time been filled with sea-water, at another with ice, and the sides above the point to which the ice could rise had been chipped and torn and weather-worn by rain and frost through endless ages. Whether this is, in fact, the explanation of their form, philosophers will in good time assure themselves; meantime, this is what they are outwardly like, which for present purposes is all that need be required.

A country so organised can be traversed in no way so conveniently as by a steam-yacht, which carries the four-and-twenty winds in its boiler. It is not the romance of yachting; and the steamer, beside the graceful schooner with its snowy canvas, seems prosaic and mechanical. The schooner does well in the open water with free air and sea room; but let no schooner venture into the Norway fjords, where slant winds come not by which you can make a course by a long reach, where there is either a glassy calm or a wind blowing up or down. If you reached the end of the Sogne you might spend a season in beating back to the sea alone, and, except in some few spots where you might not be able to go, you cannot so much as anchor for the depth of water. Shut in among these mountains, you may drift becalmed in a sailing yacht for weeks together, while to a steamer the course is as easy and sure as to a carriage on a turnpike road. Your yacht

is your house, and, like a wishing carpet, it transports you wherever you please to go, and is here and there and anywhere. You note your position on the chart; you scan it with the sense that the world of Norway is all before you to go where you like; you choose your next anchoring place; you point it out to the pilot; you know your speed—there is no night in the summer months—you dine; you smoke your evening cigar; you go to your berth; you find yourself at breakfast in your new surroundings.

So then, on that June evening, we steamed out of the Solent. Our speed in smooth water was ten knots; our distance from Udsire light, for which our course was laid, was 700 miles. It was calm and cloudless, but unusually cold. When night brought the stars we saw the comet high above us, the tail of him pointing straight away from the sun, as if the head was a lens through which the sun's rays lighted the atoms of ether behind it. Sleep, which had grown fitful in the London season, came back to us at once in our berths unscared by the grinding of the screw. We woke fresh and elastic when the decks were washed. The floors of the cabins lifted on hinges, and below were baths into which the sea-water poured till we could float in it. When we came up and looked about us we were running past the North Foreland. With the wind aft and the water smooth we sped on. I lay all the morning on a sofa in the deck cabin, and smoked and read Xenophon's 'Memorabilia.' So one day passed, and then another. On the evening of July 2 we passed through a fleet of English trawlers, a few units of the ten thousand feeders of the London stomach, the four million human beings within the bills of mortality whom the world combines to nourish. We were doing two hundred miles a day. The calm continued, and the ladies so far had suffered nothing. There was no motion save the never-resting heave of the ocean swell. Homer had observed that long undulation; Ulysses felt it when coming back from Hades to Circe's island. The thing is the same, though the word ocean has changed its meaning. To Homer Ocean was a river which ran past the grove of Proserpine. It was not till the ship had left the river mouth for the open sea that she lifted on the wave.¹

On the third afternoon the weather changed. The cold of the high latitude drove us into our winter clothes. The wind rose from the north-west, bringing thick rain with it, and a heavy

¹ Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ποταμοῖο λίπεν ῥέον Ὀκεανοῖο
 Νηὺς, ἀπὸ δ' ἵκετο κύμα θαλάσσης εὐρυπύροιο.

Odyssey, xii. 1, 2.

beam sea. The yacht rolled 20° each way. Long steamers, without sails to steady them, always do roll, but our speed was not altered. We passed Udsire Light on the 3rd, at seven in the evening, and then groped our way slowly, for, though there was no longer any night, we could see little for fog and mist. At last we picked up a pilot who brought us safely into the roadstead at Bergen, where we were to begin our acquaintance with Norway. It stands fifteen miles inland, with three fjords leading to it, built on a long tongue of rock between two inlets, and overhung with mountains. There is a great trade there, chiefly in salt fish, I believe—any way the forty thousand inhabitants seemed, from the stir on shore and in the harbour, to have plenty to occupy them. We landed and walked round. There are no handsome houses, but no beggars and no signs of poverty. 'You have poor here,' I said to a coal merchant, who came on board for orders, and could speak English. 'Poor?' he said; 'yes, many; not, of course, such poor as you have in England. Everyone has enough to eat.' To our sensations it was extremely cold; cold as an English January. But cold and heat are relative terms; and an English January might seem like summer after Arctic winters. The Bergen people took it to be summer, for we found a public garden where a band played; and there were chairs and tables for coffee out of doors. Trees and shrubs were acclimatised. Lilacs, acacias, and horse-chestnuts were in flower. There were roses in bud, and the gardeners were planting out geraniums. We saw the fish market; everywhere a curious place, for you see there the fish that are caught, the fishermen who catch them, with their boats and gear, the market women, and the citizens who come to buy. It is all fish in Bergen. The telegrams on the wall in the Bourse tell you only how fish are going in Holland and Denmark. The trade is in fish. On the rocks outside the town stand huge stacks, looking like bean stacks, but they are of dried cod and ling. The streets and squares smell of fish. A steamer bound for Hull lay close to us in the roadstead; which to leeward might have been winded for a mile. Lads stagger about the streets cased between a pair of halibuts, like the Chelsea paupers between two advertisement boards inviting us to vote for Sir Charles Dilke at an election. Still, excepting the odours, we liked Bergen well. You never hear the mendicant whine there. Those northern people know how to work and take care of themselves, and loafers can find no living among them. I do not know whether there is so much as a beggar in the whole town.

They are quiet, simple, industrious folk, who mind their own business. For politics they care nothing, not supposing that on this road is any kind of salvation for them. They are Lutherans; universally Lutherans. It is the national religion, and they are entirely satisfied with it. Protestant dissent is never heard of. There is a Catholic church in Bergen for the foreign sailors, but I doubt if the priests have converted a single Norwegian. They are a people already moderately well-to-do in body and mind, and do not need anything which the priests could give them. The intellectual essentials are well looked after—the schools are good, and well attended. The Bergen museum is a model on a small scale of what a local museum ought to be, an epitome of Norway itself past and present. Perhaps there is not another in Europe so excellent of its kind. In the gallery of antiquities there is the Norway of the sea kings, Runic tablets and inscriptions, chain armour, swords and clubs and battleaxes, pots of earthenware, stone knives and hammers of a still earlier age. There are the traces of their marauding expeditions, Greek and Italian statuettes, rings, chains, bracelets, and drinking-cups, one or two of these last especially curious, for glass was rare and precious when they were made. The glass has been broken, and pieced with silver. These obviously were the spoils of some cruise in the Mediterranean, and there is old church plate among them which also tells its story. By the side of these are the implements of the Norsemen's other trade—fishing: specimens of nets, lines, hooks, spears and harpoons, for whale and walrus, and crossbows, the barbed arrow having a line attached to it for shooting seals. In the galleries above is a very complete collection of the Scandinavian mammalia—wolves, bears, lynxes, foxes, whales, seals, and sea-horses, every kind of fish, every bird, land or water, all perfectly well classified, labelled, and looked after. Superior persons are in charge of it, who can hold their own with the leading naturalists of France or England; and all this is maintained at modest cost by the Bergen corporation.

The houses are plain, but clean; no dirt is visible anywhere, and there is one sure sign of a desire to make life graceful. The hardiest flowers only will grow out of doors, but half the windows in the town are filled with myrtles, geraniums, or carnations. With the people themselves we had little opportunity of acquaintance; but one evening, the second after our arrival, we were on deck after dinner between ten and eleven in the evening. The sunshine was still on the hills. Though chilly to us, the air

was warm to Bergen; the bay was covered with boats; family groups of citizens out enjoying themselves; music floating on the water and songs made sweet by distance; others were anchored fishing. X—— rowed me out in the yacht's punt to a point half a mile distant. We brought up at an oar's length from some young ladies with a youth in charge of them. Some question asked as an excuse for conversation was politely answered. One of them spoke excellent English; she was a lively, clever girl, had been in Ireland, and was quick with repartee, well bred and refined. Their manners were faultless, but they fished as if they had been bred to the trade. They had oilskin aprons to save their dresses, and they pulled up their fish and handled their knives and baits like professionals.

Our first taste of Norway, notwithstanding the perfume of salt ling, was very pleasant; but we had far to go—as far as Lofoden if we could manage it—and we might not loiter. We left Bergen on the 6th with a local pilot. Trondhjem or Drontheim was the next point where we were to expect letters, and two courses lead to it—either by the open sea outside the shoals and islands, or inland by the network of fjords, longer but infinitely the most interesting, with the further merit of water perfectly smooth. We started at six in the morning and flew on rapidly among tortuous channels, now sweeping through a passage scarcely wider than the yacht's length, now bursting into an archipelago of islets. The western coast of Norway is low and level—a barren undulating country, with the sea flowing freely through the hollows. Here and there are green patches of meadow with a few trees, where there would be a bonder's or yeoman's farm. Prettily painted lighthouses with their red roofs marked our course for us, and a girl or two would come out upon the balconies to look at us as we rushed by within a gun-shot. Eider-ducks flashed out of the water, the father of the family as usual the first to fly, and leaving wife and children to take care of themselves. Fishing-boats crossed us at intervals, and now and then a whale spouted: other signs of life there were none. Towards midday we entered the Sogne Fjord; we turned eastward towards the great mountain ranges; and, as in the fairy tale the rock opens to the Enchanted Prince, and he finds himself amidst gardens and palaces, so, as we ran on seemingly upon an impenetrable wall, cliff and crag fell apart, and we entered on what might be described as an infinite extension of Loch Lomond, save only that the mountains were far grander, the slopes more densely wooded, and that, far up, we

were looking on the everlasting snow, or the green glitter of the glaciers.

On either side of us, as we steamed on, we crossed the mouths of other fjords, lateral branches precisely like the parent trunk, penetrating, as we could see upon our chart, for tens of miles. Norse history grew intelligible as we looked at them. Here were the hiding-places where the vikings, wickelings, hole-and-corner pirates, ran in with their spoils; and here was the explanation of their roving lives. The few spots where a family could sustain itself on the soil are scattered at intervals of leagues. The woods are silent and desolate; wild animals of any kind we never saw; hunting there could have been none. The bears have increased since the farming introduced sheep; but a thousand years ago, save a few reindeer and a few grouse and ptarmigan, there was nothing which would feed either bear or man. Few warm-blooded creatures, furred or feathered, can endure the winter cold. A population cannot live by fish alone, and thus the Norsemen became rovers by necessity, and when summer came they formed in fleets and went south to seek their sustenance. The pine forests were their arsenal; their vessels were the best and fastest in the world; the water was their only road; they were boatmen and seamen by second nature, and the sea-coasts within reach of a summer outing were their natural prey.

We were looking for an anchoring-place where there was a likelihood of fishing; we had seen an inlet on the chart, turning out of the Sogne, which looked promising. At the upper end two rivers appeared to run into it out of freshwater lakes close by; conditions likely to yield salmon. It was our first experiment. A chart is flat. Imagination, unenlightened by experience, had pictured the fjord ending in level meadows, manageable streams winding through them, and, beyond, perhaps some Rydal or Grasmere lying tranquil among its hills. The pilot said that he knew the place, but could give us no description of it. Anticipation generally makes mistakes on such occasions, but never were fact and fancy more startlingly at variance. Lord Salisbury advised people to study geography on large maps. Flat charts are more convenient than models of a country in relief, but they are treacherous misleaders. Grand as the Sogne had been, the inlet where we struck into it was grander still. The forests on the shores were denser, the slopes steeper, the cliffs and peaks soaring up in more stupendous majesty. We ran on thus for eight or ten miles; then, turning round a projecting spur, we

found ourselves in a landlocked estuary smooth as a mirror, the mountains on one side of it beautiful in evening sunlight, on the other darkening the water with their green purple shadows; at the far extremity, which was still five miles from us, a broad white line showed, instead of our 'meadow stream,' where a mighty torrent was pouring in a cataract over the face of a precipice into the sea.

At the foot of this fall, not three hundred yards from it (no bottom was to be found at a greater distance), we anchored half an hour later, and looked about us. We were in the heart of a primitive Norwegian valley, buried among mountains so lofty and so unbroken that no road had ever entered, or could enter, it. It was the first of many which we saw afterwards of the same type, and one description will serve for all.

We were in a circular basin at the head of a fjord. In front of us was a river as large as the Clyde rushing out of a chasm a thousand feet above us, and plunging down in boiling foam. Above this chasm, and inaccessible, was one of the lakes which we had seen on the chart, and in which we had expected to catch salmon. The mountains round were, as usual, covered with wood. At the foot of the fall, and worked by part of it, was a large saw-mill with its adjoining sheds and buildings. The pines were cut as they were wanted, floated to the mill and made into planks, vessels coming at intervals to take them away. The Norwegians are accused of wasting their forests with these mills. We could see no signs of it. In the first place, the sides of the fjords are so steep that the trees can be got at only in comparatively few places. When they can be got at, there is no excessive destruction; more pines are annually swept away by avalanches than are consumed by all the mills in Norway; and the quantity is so enormous that the amount which men can use is no more likely to exhaust it than the Loch Fyne fishermen are likely to exhaust the herring shoals.

On the other side of the basin where we lay was the domain of the owner of the mill. Though the fjord ended, the great ravine in which it was formed stretched, as we could see, a couple of miles further, but it had been blocked by a moraine which stretched across it. The moraines, being formed of loose soil and stones deposited by ice in the glacial period, are available for cultivation and are indeed excellent land. There were forty or fifty acres of grass laid up for hay, a few acres of potatoes, a red-roofed sunny farmhouse with large outbuildings, carts and horses moving about, poultry crowing, cattle grazing, a boathouse

and platform where a couple of lighters were unloading. Here was the house of a substantial, prosperous bonder. His nearest neighbour must have been twelve miles from him. He, his children, and farm-servants were the sole occupants of the valley. The saw-mill was theirs; the boats were theirs; their own hands supplied everything which they wanted. They were their own carpenters, smiths, masons, and glaziers; they sheared their own sheep, spun and dyed their own wool, wove their own cloth, and cut and sewed their own dresses. It was a true specimen of primitive Norwegian life complete in itself—of peaceful, quiet, self-sufficient, prosperous industry.

The snake that spoiled Paradise had doubtless found its way into Nord Gulen (so our valley was named) as into other places, but a softer, sweeter-looking spot we had none of us ever seen. It was seven in the evening when we anchored; a skiff came off, rowed by a couple of plain, stout girls with offers of eggs and milk. Fishing lines were brought out as soon as the anchor was down. The surface water was fresh, and icy cold as coming out of the near glaciers; but it was salt a few fathoms down, and almost immediately we had a basket of dabs and whiting.

After dinner, at nine o'clock, with the sun still shining, X—— and I went ashore with our trout rods. We climbed the moraine, and a narrow lake lay spread out before us, perfectly still, the sides steep, in many places precipitous, trees growing wherever a root could strike. The lake was three miles long, and seemed to end against the foot of a range of mountains 5,000 feet high, the peaks of which, thickly covered with snow, were flushed with the crimson light of the evening. The surface of the water was spotted with rings where the trout were rising. One of the bonder's boys, who had followed us, offered his boat. It was of native manufacture, and not particularly watertight, but we stowed ourselves, one in the bow and the other in the stern. The boy had never seen such rods as ours; he looked incredulously at them, and still more at our flies; but he rowed us to the top of the lake, where a river came down out of the snow-mountain, finishing its descent with a leap over a cliff. Here he told us there were trout if we could catch them; and he took us deliberately into the spray of the waterfall, not understanding, till we were nearly wet through, that we had any objection to it. As the evening went on the scene became every minute grander and more glorious. The sunset colours deepened; a crag just over us, 2,000 feet high, stood out clear and sharp against the sky. We stayed for two or

three hours, idly throwing our flies and catching a few trout no longer than our hands, thereby confirming evidently our friend's impression of our inefficiency. At midnight we were in the yacht again—midnight, and it was like a night in England at the end of June five minutes after sunset.

This was our first experience of a Norway fjord, and for myself I would have been content to go no further; have studied in detail the exquisite beauty which was round us; have made friends with the bonder and his household, and found out what they made of their existence under such conditions. There in epitome would have been seeing Norway and the Norwegians. It was no Arcadia of piping shepherds. In the summer the young men are away at the mountain farms, high grazing ground underneath the snow line. The women work with their brothers and husbands, and weave and make the clothes. They dress plainly, but with good taste, with modest embroidery; a handsome bag hangs at the waist of the housewife. There is reading, too, and scholarship. A boy met us on a pathway, and spoke to us in English. We asked him when he had been in England. He had never been beyond his own valley; in the long winter evenings he had taught himself with an English grammar. No wonder that with such ready adaptabilities they make the best of emigrants. The overflow of population which once directed itself in such rude fashion on Normandy and England now finds its way to the United States, and no incomers are more welcome there.

But a steam yacht is for movement and change. We were to start again at noon the next day. The morning was hot and bright. While the engineer was getting up steam, we rowed to the foot of the great fall. I had my small trout rod with me, and trolled a salmon fly on the chance. There were no salmon there, but we saw brown trout rising; so I tried the universal favourites—a March brown and a red spinner—and in a moment had a fish that bent the rod double. Another followed, and another, and then I lost a large one. I passed the rod to X—, in whose hands it did better service. In an hour we had a basket of trout that would have done credit to an English chalk stream. The largest was nearly three pounds weight, admirably grown, and pink; fattened, I suppose, on the mussels which paved the bottom of the rapids. We were off immediately after, still guided to a new point by the chart, but not in this instance by the chart only. There was a spot which had been discovered the year before by

the Duke of —, of which we had a vague description. We had a log on board which had been kept by the Duke's mate, in which he had recorded many curious experiences; among the rest, an adventure at a certain lake not very far from where we were. The Duke had been successful there, and his lady had been very nearly successful. 'We had grief yesterday,' the mate wrote, 'her Grace losing a twelve-pound salmon which she had caught on her little line, and just as they were going to hook it, it went off, and we were very sorry.' The grief went deep, it seemed, for the next day the crew were reported as only 'being as well as could be expected after so melancholy an accident.' We determined to find the place, and, if possible, avenge her Grace. We crossed the Sogne and went up into the Nord Fjord—of all the fjords the most beautiful; for on either side there are low terraces of land left by glacier action, and more signs of culture and human habitations. After running for fifty miles, we turned into an inlet corresponding tolerably with the Duke's directions, and in another half-hour we were again in a mountain basin like that which we had left in the morning. The cataracts were in their glory, the day having been warm for a wonder. I counted seventeen all close about us when we anchored, any one of which would have made the fortune of a Scotch hotel, and would have been celebrated by Mr. Murray in pages of passionate eloquence. But Strömen or 'the Streams,' as the place was called, was less solitary than Nord Gulen. There was a large bonder's farm on one side of us. There was a cluster of houses at the mouth of a river, half a mile from it. Above the village was a lake, and at the head of the lake an establishment of saw-mills. A gun-shot from where we lay, on a rocky knoll, was a white wooden church, the Sunday meeting-place of the neighbourhood; boats coming to it from twenty miles round bringing families in their bright Sunday attire. Roads there were none. To have made a league of road among such rocks and precipices would have cost the State a year's revenue. But the water was the best of approaches, and boats the cheapest of carriages. We called on the chief bonder to ask for leave to fish in the lake. It was granted with the readiest courtesy; but the Norsemen are proud in their way, and do not like the Englishman's habit of treating all the world as if it belonged to him. The low meadows round his house were bright with flowers: two kinds of wild geranium, an exquisite variety of harebell, sea-pride, pansies, violets, and the great pinguicula. Among the rocks were foxgloves in full splendour, and

wild roses just coming into flower. The roses alone of the Norway flora disappointed me; the leaves are large, dark, and handsome; the flower is insignificant, and falls to pieces within an hour of its opening. We were satisfied that we were on the right spot. The church stood on a peninsula, the neck of which immediately adjoined our anchorage. Behind it was the lake which had been the scene of the Duchess's misfortune. We did not repeat our midnight experiment. We waited for a leisurely breakfast. Five of the crew then carried the yacht's cutter through fifty yards of bushes; and we were on the edge of the lake itself, which, like all these inland waters, was glassy, still, deep, and overhung with precipices. The bonder had suggested to us that there were bears among them, which we might kill if we pleased, as they had just eaten seven of his sheep. So little intention had we of shooting bears that we had not brought rifle or even gun with us. Our one idea was to catch the Duchess's twelve-pound salmon, or, if not that one, at least another of his kindred.

In a strange lake it is well always to try first with spinning tackle, a bait trolled with a long line from the stern of a boat rowed slowly. It will tell you if there are fish to be caught; it will find out for you where the fish most haunt, if there are any. We had a curious experience of the value of this method on a later occasion, and on one of our failures. We had found a lake joined to an arm of a fiord by a hundred yards only of clear running water. We felt certain of finding salmon there, and if we had begun with flies we might have fished all day and have caught nothing. Instead of this we began to spin. In five minutes we had a run; we watched eagerly to see what we had got. It was a whiting pollock. We went on. We hooked a heavy fish. We assured ourselves that now we had at least a trout. It turned out to be a cod. The sea fish, we found, ran freely into the fresh water, and had chased trout and salmon completely out. At Strömen we were in better luck. We started with phantom minnows on traces of strong single gut, forty yards of line, and forty more in reserve on the reel. Two men rowed us up the shore an oar's length from the rocks. Something soon struck me. The reel flew round, the line spun out. In the wake of the boat there was a white flash, as a fish sprang into the air. Was it the Duchess's salmon? It was very like it, anyway; and if we had lost him, it would have been entered down as a salmon. It proved, however, to be no salmon, but a sea trout, and such a sea trout as we had never seen; not a bull trout, not a peel, not a Welsh sewin, or Irish

white trout, but a Norwegian, of a kind of its own, different from all of them. It was the first of many which followed, of sizes varying from three pounds to the twelve pounds which the mate had recorded; fine, bold, fighting fish, good to look at, good to catch, and as good to eat when we tried them. Finally in the shallower water, at the upper end, a fish took me, which from its movements was something else, and proved to be a large char, like what they take in Derwentwater, only four times the weight. Looking carefully at the water we saw more char swimming leisurely near the surface, taking flies. We dropped our spinning tackle, and took our fly rods; and presently we were pulling in char, the blood royal of the salmonidæ, the elect of all the finned children of the fresh water, as if they had been so many Thames chub.

What need to talk more of fish? The mate's log had guided us well. We caught enough and to spare, and her Grace's wrongs were avenged sufficiently. We landed for our frugal luncheon—dry biscuits and a whisky flask—but we sate in a bed of whortleberries, purple with ripe fruit, by a cascade which ran down out of a snow-field. Horace would have invited his dearest friend to share in such a banquet.

The next day was Sunday. The sight of the boats coming from all quarters to church was very pretty. Fifteen hundred people at least must have collected. I attended the service, but could make little of it. I could follow the hymns with a book; but copies of the Liturgy, though printed, are not provided for general use, and are reserved to the clergy. The faces of the men were extremely interesting. There was nothing in them to suggest the old freebooter. They were mild and gentle-looking, with fair skins, fair hair, and light eyes, grey or blue. The expression was sensible and collected, but with nothing about it specially adventurous or daring. The women, in fact, were more striking than their husbands. There was a steady strength in their features which implied humour underneath. Two girls, I suppose sisters, reminded me of Mrs. Gaskell. With the Lutheran, Sunday afternoon is a holiday. A yacht in such a place was a curiosity, and a fleet of boats surrounded us. Such as liked came on board and looked about them. They were well bred, and showed no foolish surprise. One old dame, indeed, being taken down into the ladies' cabin, did find it too much for her. She dropped down and kissed the carpet. One of our party wondered afterwards whether there was any chance of the Norwegians attaining

a higher civilisation. I asked her to define civilisation. Did industry, skill, energy, sufficient food and raiment, sound practical education, and piety which believes without asking questions, constitute civilisation; and would luxury, newspapers, and mechanics' institutes mean a higher civilisation? The old question must first be answered, What is the real purpose of human life?

At Strömen, too, we could not linger; we stopped a few hours at Daviken on our way north, a considerable place for Norway, on the Nord Fjord. There is a bishop, I believe, belonging to it, but him we did not see. We called at the parsonage and found the pastor's wife and children. The pastor himself came on board afterwards—a handsome man of sixty-seven, with a broad, full forehead, large nose, and straight grizzled hair. He spoke English, and would have spoken Latin if we had ourselves been equal to it. He had read much English literature, and was cultivated above the level of our own average country clergy. His parish was thirty miles long on both sides of the fjord. He had several churches, to all of which he attended in turn, with boats in summer, and I suppose the ice in winter. We did not ask his salary; it was doubtless small, but sufficient. He had a school under him which he said was well attended. The master, who had a State certificate, was allowed 25*l.* a year, on which he was able to maintain himself. We could not afford time to see more of this gentleman, however. We were impatient for Trondhjem; the engineer wanted coals; we wanted our letters and newspapers; and the steward wanted a washerwoman. On our way up, too, we had arranged to give a day or two to Romsdal, Rolf the Ganger's country—on an island in Romsdal Fjord the ruins can still be seen of Rolf's Castle. It was there that Rolf, or Rollo as we call him, set out with his comrades to conquer Normandy, and produce the chivalry who fought at Hastings and organised feudal England. This was not to be missed; and as little, a visit which we had promised to a descendant of one of those Normans, a distinguished Tory member of the House of Commons, and lord of half an English county. He had bought an estate in these parts, with a salmon river, and had built himself a house there.

Romsdal, independent of its antiquarian interest, is geologically the most remarkable place which we saw in Norway. The fjord expands into a wide estuary or large inland lake, into which many valleys open and several large streams discharge

themselves. Romsdal proper was once evidently itself a continuation of the Great Fjord. The mountains on each side of it are peculiarly magnificent. On the left Romsdal's Horn shoots up into the sky, a huge peak which no one has ever climbed, and will try the mettle of the Alpine Club when they have conquered Switzerland. On the right is a precipitous wall of cliffs and crags as high and bold as the Horn itself. The upper end of the valley which divides them terminates in a narrow fissure, through which a river thunders down that carries the water of the great central icefield into the valley. From thence it finds its way into the fjord, running through the glen itself which is seven or eight miles long, two miles wide, and richly cultivated and wooded. From the sea the appearance of the shore is most singular. It is laid out in level grassy terraces, stretching all round the bay, rising in tiers one above the other, so smooth, so even, so nicely scarfed, that the imagination can hardly be persuaded that they are not the work of human engineers. But under water the formation is the same. At one moment you are in twenty fathoms, the next in forty, the next your cable will find no bottom; and it is as certain as any conclusion on such subjects can be, that long ago, long ages before Rolf, and Knut, and the Vikings, the main fjord was blocked with ice; that while the ice barrier was still standing, and the valleys behind it were fresh-water lakes, the rivers gradually filled them with a *débris* of stone and soil. Each level terrace was once a lake bottom. The ice broke or melted away at intervals. The water was lowered suddenly forty or fifty feet, and the ground lately covered was left bare as the ice receded. We found our Englishman. His house is under the Horn at the bend of the valley, where the ancient fjord must have ended. It stands in a green open meadow, approached through alder and birch woods, the first cataract where the snow-water plunges through the great chasm being in sight of the windows, and half-a-dozen inimitable salmon pools within a few minutes' walk. The house itself was simple enough, made of pine wood entirely, as the Norway houses always are, and painted white. It contained some half-dozen rooms, furnished in the plainest English style, the summer house of a sportsman who is tired of luxury, and finds the absence of it an agreeable exchange. A man cannot be always catching salmon, even in Norway, and a smattering of science and natural history would be a serviceable equipment in a scene where there are so many curious objects worth attending to. Our friend's tastes,

however, did not lie in that direction. His shelves were full of yellow-backed novels—French, English, and German. His table was covered with the everlasting ‘Saturday Review,’ ‘Pall Mall Gazette,’ ‘Times,’ and ‘Standard.’ I think he suspected science as part of modern liberalism; for he was a Tory of the Tories, a man with whom the destinies had dealt kindly, in whose eyes therefore all existing arrangements were as they should be, and those who wished to meddle with them were enemies of the human race. He was sad and sorrowful. The world was not moving to his mind, and he spoke as if he was *ultimus Romanorum*. But if an aristocrat, he was an aristocrat of the best type—princely in his thought, princely in his habits, princely even in his salmon fishing. The pools in the river being divided by difficult rapids, he had a boat and a boatman for each. The sport was ample but uniform. There was an ice cellar under the house where we saw half-a-dozen great salmon lying which had been caught in the morning. One salmon behaves much like another; and after one has caught four or five, and when one knows that one can catch as many more as one wishes, impatient people might find the occupation monotonous. Happily there was a faint element of uncertainty still left. It was possible to fail even in the Romsdal. We were ourselves launched in boats in different pools at the risk of our lives to try our hands; we worked diligently for a couple of hours, and I at least moved not so much as a fin. It was more entertaining a great deal to listen to our host as he declaimed upon the iniquities of our present Radical chief. Politics, like religion, are matters of faith on which reason says as little as possible. One passionate belief is an antidote to another. It is impossible to continue to believe enthusiastically in a creed which a fellow mortal with as much sense as oneself denies and execrates, and the collision of opinion produces the prudent scepticism which in most matters is the least mischievous frame of mind.

Here, too, in these pleasant surroundings we would gladly have loitered for a day or two; but the steward was clamorous over his dirty linen, and it was not to be. Trondhjem, on which our intentions had been so long fixed, was reached at last. The weather had grown cold again, cold with cataracts of rain. Let no one go to Norway even in the dog days without a winter wardrobe. The sea-water in our baths was at 47°; we had fires in the cabin stove, and could not warm ourselves; we shivered under four blankets in our berths. The mountains were buried in clouds,

and the landscape was reduced to a dull grey mist ; but the worst of weathers will serve for reading letters, laying in coal, and wandering about a town.

Trondhjem ought to have been interesting. It was the capital of the old Norse kings. There reigned the Olafs. It lies half-way up the Norway coast in the very centre of the kingdom, on a broad landlocked bay. The situation was chosen for its strength ; for a deep river all but surrounds the peninsula on which the town is built, and on the land side it must have been impregnable. The country behind it is exceptionally fertile, and is covered over with thriving farms ; but streets and shops are wearisome, and even the cathedral did not tempt us to pay it more than a second visit. It is a stern solid piece of building ; early Norman in type, with doors, windows, and arches of zigzag pattern. It had fallen out of repair and is now being restored by the State ; hundreds of workmen are busy chipping and hammering, and are doing their business so well that the new work can hardly be distinguished from the old. But Catholic Christianity never seems to have got any hearty hold on Norway. St. Olaf thrust it upon the people at the sword's point, but their imaginations remained heathen till the Reformation gave them a creed which they could believe. I could not find a single tomb in the cathedral. I inquired where the old kings and chiefs were buried, and no one could tell me. I found, in fact, that they had usually come to an end in some sea-battle, and had found their graves in their own element. Olaf Tryggveson went down, the last survivor in the last ship of his fleet, the rays of the sunset flashing on his armour as the waves closed over him. St. Olaf died in the same way. The entire absence of monumental stones or figures in the great metropolitan church of Norway is strange, sad, and impressive.

The town being exhausted, we drove a few miles out of it to see a foss, one of the grandest in the country. We said 'Oh!' to it, as Wolfe Tone did to Grattan. But waterfalls had become too common with us, and, in fact, the excitement about them has always seemed exaggerated to me. I was staying once in a house in the north of New York State when a gentleman came in fresh from Niagara, and poured out his astonishment over the enormous mass of water falling into the caldron below. 'Why is it astonishing?' asked a Yankee who was present. 'Why shouldn't the water fall? The astonishing thing would be if it didn't fall.'

In short, we left the washerwoman in possession of the linen,

which we could return and pick up when it was done, and we steamed away to examine the great Trondhjem Fjord; fishing and making bad sketches as the weather would allow. The weather generally allowed us to do very little, and drove us upon our books, which we could have read as well in our rooms at home. I had brought the 'Elective Affinities' with me. I had not read it for thirty years. Then it had seemed to me the wisest of all didactic works. 'Unconscious cerebration,' as Dr. Carpenter calls it, when I read it again, had revolutionised my principles of judgment. I could still recognise the moral purpose. There are tendencies in human nature, like the chemical properties of material substances, which will claim possession of you, and even appear to have a moral right over you. But if you yield you will be destroyed. You can command yourself, and you must. Very true, very excellent; and set forth with Goethe's greatest power of fascination; but I found myself agreeing with the rest of the world that it was a monstrous book after all. To put the taste out I tried Seneca, but I scarcely improved matters. Seneca's fame as a moralist and philosopher was due, perhaps, in the first instance, to his position about the Court, and to his enormous wealth. A little merit passes for a great deal when it is framed in gold—once established it would remain, from the natural liking of men for virtuous cant. Those lectures to Lucilius on the beauty of poverty from the greatest money-lender and usurer in the Empire! Lucilius is to practise voluntary hardships, is to live at intervals on beggars' fare, and sleep on beggars' pallets, that he may sympathise in the sufferings of mortality and be independent of outward things. If Seneca meant it, why did he squeeze five millions of our money out of the provinces with loans and contracts? He was barren as the Sahara to me. Not a green spot could I find, not a single genial honest thought, in all the four volumes with which I had encumbered myself. His finest periods rang hollow like brass sovereigns. The rain would not stop, so we agreed to defy the rain and to fish in spite of it. We had the fjord before us for a week, and we landed wherever we could hear of lake or river. For twelve hours together the waterspout would come down upon us; we staggered about in thickest woollen, with macintoshes and indiarubber boots. With flapped oilskin hats we should have been weatherproof, but with one of these I was unprovided; and, in spite of collars and woollen wrappers, the water would find its way down our necks till there was nothing dry left about us but the feet. Clothes grow heavy under such

conditions ; we had to take our lightest rods with us, and now and then came to grief. I was fishing alone one day in a broad rocky stream fringed with alder bushes, dragging my landing net along with me. At an open spot where there was a likely run within reach I had caught a four-pound sea trout. I threw again ; a larger fish rose and carried off my fly. I mounted a 'doctor,' blue and silver, on the strongest casting line in my book, and on the second cast a salmon came. The river in the middle was running like a mill-sludge. I could not follow along the bank for the trees ; my only hope was to hold on and drag the monster into the slack water under the shore. My poor little rod did its best, but its best was not enough ; the salmon found his way into the waves, round went the reel, off flew the line to the last inch, and then came the inevitable catastrophe. The fish sprang wildly into the air, the rod straightened out, the line came home, and my salmon and my bright doctor sped away together to the sea.

We were none the worse for our wettings. Each evening we came home dripping and draggled. A degree or two more of cold would have turned the rain into snow. Yet it signified nothing. We brought back our basketfuls of trout, and the Norwegian trout are the best in the world. We anchored one evening in a chasm with the mountain walls rising in precipices on both sides. The next morning as I was lying in my berth I heard a conversation between the steward and the captain. The captain asked the orders for the day ; the steward answered (he was the wit of the ship), 'Orders are to stretch an awning over the fjord that his lordship may fish.'

But the weather so far beat us that we were obliged to abandon Lofoden. We were now at the end of July, and it was not likely to mend, so we determined to turn about and spend the rest of our time in the large fjords of South Norway. Trondhjem had been our furthest point ; we could not coal there after all, so we had to make for Christiansund on the way. I was not sorry for it, for Christiansund is a curious little bustling place, and worth seeing. It is the head-quarters of the North Sea fishing trade near the open ocean, and the harbour is formed by three or four islands divided by extremely narrow channels, with a deep roomy basin in the middle of them. One of our crew was ill and had to be taken for two or three days to the hospital. The arrangements seemed excellent, as every public department is in Norway. The town was pretty. The Norwegians dress plainly ; but they like bright colours for their houses, and the red-tiled

roofs and blue and yellow painted fronts looked pleasant after our clouds of mist. The climate from the proximity of the ocean is said to be mild for its latitude. The snow lies up to the lower windows through the winter, but that went for nothing. There were stocks and columbines in the gardens; there were ripe gooseberries and red currants and pink thorn and laburnum in flower. The harbour was full of fishing smacks, like Brixham trawlers, only rather more old-fashioned. Gay steam-ferry boats rushed about from island to island; large ships were loading; well-dressed strangers were in the streets and shops; an English yacht had come like ourselves to take in coal, and was moored side by side with us. There are fewer people in the world than we imagine, and we fall on old acquaintances when we least expect them. The once beautiful — was on board whom I had known forty-five years ago. She had married a distinguished engineer, who was out for his holiday.

We stayed at Christiansund or in the neighbourhood till our sick man was recovered, and then followed (under better auspices as regarded weather) ten days of scenery hunting which need not be described. We went to Sondal, Lærdal, Nordal, and I don't know how many 'dals,' all famous places in their way, but with a uniformity of variety which becomes tedious in a story. One only noticeable feature I observed about the sheds and poorer houses in these out-of-the-way districts. They lay turf sods over the roofs, which become thick masses of vegetation; and on a single cottage roof you may see half-a-dozen trees growing ten or fifteen feet high. For lakes and mountains, however beautiful, the appetite becomes soon satiated. They please, but they cease to excite; and there is something artificial in the modern enthusiasm for landscapes. Velasquez or Rubens could appreciate a fine effect of scenery as well as Turner or Stansfield; but with them it was a framework, subordinate to some human interest in the centre of the picture. I suppose it is because man in these democratic days has for a time ceased to touch the imagination that our poets and artists are driven back upon rocks and rivers and trees and skies; but the eclipse can only be temporary, and I confess, for myself, that, sublime as the fjords were, the saw-mills and farm-houses and fishing-boats, and the patient, industrious people wrestling a wholesome living out of that stern environment, affected me very much more nearly. I cannot except even the Geiranger, as tremendous a piece of natural architecture as exists in the globe. The fjord in the Geiranger is a quarter of a mile

wide and 600 fathoms deep. The walls of it are in most places not figuratively, but literally, precipices, and the patch of sky above your head seems to narrow as you look up. I hope I was duly impressed with the wonder of this ; but even here there was something which impressed me more, and that was the singular haymaking which was going on. The Norwegians depend for their existence on their sheep and cattle. Every particle of grass available for hay is secured ; and grass, peculiarly nutritious, often grows on the high ridges 2,000 feet up. This they save as they can, and they have original ways of doing it. In the Geiranger it is tied tightly in bundles and flung over the cliffs to be gathered up in boats below. But science, too, is making its way in this northern wilderness. The farm-houses, for shelter's sake, are always at the bottom of valleys, and are generally near the sea. At one of our anchorages, shut in as usual among the mountains, we observed one evening from the deck what looked like a troop of green goats skipping and bounding down the cliffs. We discovered through a binocular that they were bundles of hay. The clever bonder had carried up a wire, like a telegraph wire, from his courtyard to a projecting point of mountain : on this ran iron rings as travellers which brought the grass directly to his door.

Twice only in our wanderings we had fallen in with our tourist countrymen : once at Lærdal, where a high road comes down to a pier, and is met there by a corresponding steamer ; the second time coming down from the Geiranger, when we passed a boat with two ladies and a gentleman, English evidently, the gentleman touching his hat to the Yacht Club flag as we went by. Strange and pleasant the short glimpse of English faces in that wild chasm ! But we were plunged into the very middle of our countrymen at the last spot to which we went in search of the picturesque—a spot worth a few words as by far the most regularly beautiful of all the places which we visited. At the head of one of the long inlets which runs south, I think, out of the Hardanger Fjord (but our rapid movements were confusing) stands Odde, once a holy place in Scandinavian mythological history. There is another Odde in Iceland, also sacred—I suppose Odin had something to do with it. The Odde Fjord is itself twenty miles long, and combines the softest and grandest aspects of Norwegian scenery. The shores are exceptionally well cultivated, richer than any which we had seen. Every half-mile some pretty farm-house was shining red through clumps of trees, the many cattle sheds speaking for the wealth of the owner. Above,

through the rifts of higher ranges you catch a sight of the Central Icefield glacier streaming over among the broken chasms and melting into waterfalls. At Odde itself there is an extensive tract of fertile soil on the slope of a vast moraine, which stretches completely across the broad valley. On the sea at the landing-place is a large church and two considerable hotels, which were thronged with visitors. A broad road excellently engineered leads down to it, and we found a staff of English-speaking guides whose services we did not require. We had seen much of the ice action elsewhere, but the performances of it at Odde were more wonderful even than at Romsdal. The moraine is perhaps 450 feet high; the road winds up the side of it among enormous granite boulders, many of them weighing thousands of tons, which the ice has tossed about like pebble stones. On reaching the crest you see a lake a quarter of a mile off; but before you come to it you cross some level fields, very rich to look at, and with patches of white-heart cherry-trees scattered about, the fruit, when we came there at the end of August, being actually ripe and extremely good. These fields were the old lake bottom; but the river has cut a dyke for itself through the top of the moraine, and the lake has gone down some twenty feet, leaving them dry.

The weather (penitent, perhaps, for having so long persecuted us) was in a better humour. Our days at Odde were warm and without a cloud, and we spent them chiefly by the lake, which was soft as Windermere. We had come into a land of fruit; not cherries only, but wild raspberries and strawberries were offered us in leaves by the girls on the road. The road itself followed the lake margin, among softly rounded and wooded hills, the great mountains out of sight behind them, save only in one spot where, through a gorge, you looked straight up to the eternal snow-field, from which a vast glacier descended almost into the lake itself, the ice imitating precisely the form of falling water, crushing its way among the rocks, parting in two where it met a projecting crag, and uniting again behind it, seeming even to heave and toss in angry waves of foam.

From this glacier the lake was chiefly fed, and was blue, like skimmed milk, in consequence. We walked along it for several miles. Fishing seemed hopeless in water of such a texture. As we turned a corner two carriages dashed by us with some young men and dogs and guns—cockneys out for their holiday. ‘Any sport, sir?’ one of them shouted to me, seeing a rod in my hand, in the cheerful familiar tone which assumed that sport must be

the first and only object which one could have in such a place. They passed on to the hotel, and the presence of so many of our countrymen was inclining us to cut short our own stay. Some of the party, however, wished to inspect the glacier. We were ourselves assured that there were salmon in the lake, which, in spite of the colour, could be caught there. It was the last opportunity which we should have, as after Odde our next move was to be Christiania. So we agreed to take one more day there and make the most of it. We got two native boats, and started to seek adventures. Alas! we had the loveliest views; but the blue waters of Odde, however fair to look upon, proved as ill to fish in as at the first sight of them we were assured they must be. Our phantoms could not be seen three inches off, and the stories told us we concluded to be fables invented for the tourists. I, for my own part, had gone to the furthest extremity of the lake, where it ended in a valley like Borrodale. I was being rowed listlessly back, having laid aside my tackle, and wishing that I could talk to my old boatman, who looked as if all the stories of the Edda were inside him, when my eye was suddenly caught by a cascade coming down out of a ravine into the lake which had not been bred in the glaciers, and was limpid as the Itchen itself. At the mouth of this it was just possible that there might be a char or something with fins that could see to rise. It was my duty to do what I could for the yacht's cuisine. I put together my little trout rod for a last attempt, and made my boatman row me over to it. The clear water was not mixing with the blue, but pushing its way through the milky masses, which were eddying and rolling as if they were oil. In a moment I had caught a sea trout. Immediately after I caught a second, and soon a basketful. They had been attracted by the purer liquid, and were gathered there in a shoal. They were lying with their noses up the stream at the furthest point to which they could go. I got two or three, and those the largest, by throwing my fly against the rocks exactly at the fall. X—— came afterwards and caught more and bigger fish than I did; and our sport, which indeed we had taken as it came without specially seeking for it, was brought to a good end. The end of August was come, and with it the period of our stay in the fjords. We had still to see Christiania, and had no time to lose. But of all the bits of pure natural loveliness which we had fallen in with, Odde and its blue lake, and glacier, and cherry orchards, and wild strawberries has left the fairest impression; perhaps, however, only because it was the last, for we were

going home ; and they say that when a man dies, the last image which he has seen is photographed on his retina.

But now away. The smoke pours through the funnel. The steam is snorting like an impatient horse. The quick rattle of the cable says that the anchor is off the ground. We were off, and had done with fjords. The inner passages would serve no longer ; we had to make for open sea once more to round the foot of the peninsula. It is at no time the softest of voyages. The North Sea is not the home of calm sunsets and light-breathing zephyrs, and it gave us a taste of its quality, which, after our long sojourn in smooth water, was rather startling. If the wind and sea are ever wilder than we found them in those latitudes, I have no desire to be present at the exhibition. We fought the storm for twenty-four hours, and were then driven for refuge into a roadstead at the southern extremity of Norway near Mandal. The neighbourhood was interesting, if we had known it, for at Mandal Mary Stuart's Earl of Bothwell was imprisoned when he escaped from the Orkneys to Denmark. The dungeon where he was confined is still to be seen, and as the Earl was an exceptional villain, the authentic evidence of eyesight that he had spent an uncomfortable time in his exile would not have been unwelcome. But we discovered what we had lost when it was too late to profit by our information. We amused ourselves by wandering on shore and observing the effect of the change of latitude on vegetation. We found the holly thriving, of which in the north we had not seen a trace, and the hazel bushes had ripe nuts on them. There was still a high sea the next day ; but we made thirty miles along the coast to Arendal, an advanced thriving town of modern aspect built in a sheltered harbour, with broad quays, fine buildings, and a gay parade. It was almost dark when we entered ; and the brilliant lights and moving crowds and carriages formed a singular contrast to the unfinished scenes of unregenerate nature which we had just left. The Norse nature, too, hard and rugged as it may be, cannot resist the effect of its occupations. Aristotle observes that busy sea towns are always democratic. Norway generally, though Republican, is intensely Conservative. The bonders who elect the representatives walk in the ways of their fathers, and have the strongest objection to new ideas. Arendal, I was told, sends to Parliament an eloquent young Radical, the admired of all the newspapers. There is, I believe, no likelihood that he will bring about a revolution. But there is no knowing when the king is an absentee. We spent one night at Arendal.

In the morning the storm had left us, and before sunset we were at anchor at Christiania. It was Sunday. The weather was warm, the water smooth, the woody islands which surround and shelter the anchorage were glowing in gold and crimson. Christiania, a city of domes and steeples, lay before us with its fleets of steamers and crowded shipping. Hundreds of tiny yachts and pleasure boats were glancing round us. There is no sour Sabbatarianism in Norway. One of the islands is a kind of Cremorne. When night fell the music of the city band came floating over the water; blue lights blazed and rockets flashed into the sky with their flights of crimson stars. It was a scene which we had not expected in these northern regions; but life can have its enjoyments even above the sixtieth parallel.

There is much to be seen in Christiania. There is a Parliament house and a royal palace, and picture galleries and botanical gardens, and a museum of antiquities, and shops where articles of native workmanship can be bought by Englishmen at three times their value, and ancient swords and battleaxes, and drinking horns and rings and necklaces, genuine, at present, for all I know to the contrary, but capable of imitation, and likely in these days of progress to be speedily imitated. If the Holy Coat of Trèves has been multiplied by ten, why should there not be ten swords of Olaf Tryggveson. But all these things are written of in the handbook of Mr. Murray, where the curious can read of them. One real wonder we saw and saw again at Christiania, and could not satisfy ourselves with seeing; and with an account of this I shall end. It was a Viking's ship; an authentic vessel in which, while Norway was still heathen, before St. Olaf drilled his people into Christianity with sword and gallows, a Norse chief and his crew had travelled these same waters, and in which, when he died, he had been laid to rest. It had been covered in with clay which had preserved the timbers. It had been recovered almost entire—the vessel itself, the oars, the boats, the remnants of the cordage, even down to the copper caldron in which he and his men had cooked their dinners; the names, the age, the character of them all buried in the soil, but the proof surviving that they had been the contemporaries and countrymen of the 'Danes' who drove the English Alfred into the marshes of Somersetshire.

Our yacht's company were as eager to see this extraordinary relic as ourselves. We went in a body, and never tired of going. It had been found fifty miles away, had been brought to Christiania, and had been given in charge to the University. A

solid weatherproof shed had been built for it where we could study its structure at our leisure.

The first thing which struck us all was the beauty of the model, as little resembling the old drawings of Norse or Saxon ships as the figures which do duty there as men resemble human beings. White, of Cowes, could not build a vessel with finer lines, or offering less resistance to the water. She was eighty feet long, and seventeen and a half feet beam. She may have drawn three feet, scarcely more, when her whole complement was on board. She was pierced for thirty-two oars, and you could see the marks on the side of the rowlocks where the oars had worn the timber. She had a single mast, stepped in the solid trunk of a tree, which had been laid along the keel. Her knee timbers were strong; but her planks were unexpectedly slight, scarcely more than half an inch thick. They had been formed by careful splitting; there is no sign of the action of a saw, and the ends of them had been trimmed off by the axe. They had been set on and fastened with iron nails, and the seams had been carefully caulked. Deck she had none—a level floor a couple of feet below the gunwale ran from stem to stern. The shields of the crew formed a bulwark, and it was easy to see where they had been fixed. Evidently, therefore, she had been a war-ship; built for fighting, not for carrying cargoes. But there was no shelter, and could have been none; no covered forecastle, no stern cabin. She stood right open fore and aft to wind and waves; and though she would have been buoyant in a sea-way and in the heaviest gale would have shipped little water, even Norsemen could not have been made of such impenetrable stuff that they would have faced the elements with no better protection in any distant expedition. That those who sailed in her were to some extent careful of themselves is accidentally certain. Among the stores was a plank with crossbars nailed upon it, meant evidently for landing on a beach. One of our men, who was quick at inferences, exclaimed at once, ‘These fellows must have worn shoes and stockings. If they had been barelegged they would have jumped overboard and would not have wanted a landing plank.’

I conclude, therefore, that she was not the kind of vessel of which the summer squadrons were composed that came down our English Channel, but that she was intended either for the fjords only, or for the narrow waters between Norway and Sweden and Denmark at the mouth of the Baltic. Her rig must have been precisely what we had been lately seeing on the Sogne or Hardanger; a single large sail on a square yard fit for running before

the wind, or with the wind slightly on the quarter, but useless at a closer point. The rudder hung over the side a few feet from the stern, a heavy oar with a broad blade and a short handle, shaped so exactly like the rudders of the Roman vessels on Trajan's Column, that the Norsemen, it is likely, had seen the pattern somewhere and copied it.

Such is this strange remnant of the old days which has suddenly started into life. So vivid is the impression which it creates, that it is almost as if some Sweyn or Harold in his proper person had come back among us from the grave. If we were actually to see such a man we should be less conscious perhaps of our personal superiority than we are apt to imagine. A law of compensation follows us through our intellectual and mechanical progress. The race collectively knows and can execute immeasurably greater things than the Norsemen. Individually they may have been as ready and intelligent as ourselves. The shipwright certainly, who laid the lines of the Viking's galley would have something to teach as well as to learn in the yard of a modern yacht builder.

But enough now of Norway. Our time was out; our tour was over; we seated ourselves once more on our wishing carpet, and desired to be at Cowes; we were transported thither, with the care and almost the speed with which the genius of the lamp transported the palace of Aladdin; and we felt that we had one superiority at least which the Viking would have envied us.

J. A. FROUDE.

A Ghost.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.'

LOVE, will you let me in ?
 I am knocking at the door.

Love, can I shelter win
 Close beside you, as of yore ?
 Of my grave I am aweary,
 Narrow, narrow, dark and dreary ;
 Wildly from its clasp I flew,
 Love, just to look at you.

I am so white and chill :
 Love, will you shrink away ?
 If you will not kiss me still
 Do not let me in, I pray.
 I have cross'd the mighty river :
 Will you fear me ? Do you shiver ?
 If your arms refuse to woo,
 Death is more kind than you.

Love, if *you* were a ghost
 And *I* were alive and warm—
 Ah, perhaps—I will not boast—
 I might shudder at your form ;
 I might flee before the presence
 Of an unembodied essence.
 Hush ! hush ! it is not true,
 Love, I should know 'twas *you* !

Sir Hilary's Prayer,

AN UNSOLVED ENIGMA.

THE poetical charades or enigmas of that graceful writer Winthrop Mackworth Praed are widely known. First published in various journals, magazines, and annuals, it is doubtful whether all have yet been recovered. Only nineteen were given in the incomplete first collected edition of Praed's verses—poems they can hardly be called—which appeared in 1853, thanks to the enterprise of an American publisher, Redfield of New York. In 1845–6 fourteen were reproduced in 'Knight's Penny Magazine,' a duodecimo weekly publication which ended with the thirty-second number, completing the second volume. Charles Knight himself contributed to the first volume a notice of the life and writings of Praed, whom, he observes, he had known 'with some degree of intimacy from 1820 to 1828.' The fourteen enigmas are given singly at irregular intervals. In every case the verses, upon the right-hand portion of the page, are accompanied by delicate woodcuts, from designs by the well-known pupil of Haydon and Bewick, William Harvey. These fill the corresponding left-hand space, and supply to each stanza a pictorial suggestion of the word which contributes to or gives the solution. Without such assistance very little penetration is required for the discovery of the answers in every case but one. At page 176 of the second volume the exception appears in 'Enigma No. 12,' which commences with the words, 'Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt,' and is illustrated by designs which neither reveal nor suggest a possible solution. None, we may therefore conclude, was known to the artist or editor; and, as far as the writer is aware, from its first publication to the present time no plausible explanation of the enigma has been offered. In 1864 Mr. Moxon published an enlarged collection of Praed's poetical writings in two volumes, of which the second contains thirty-eight charades. The answers appear in the general index. As the editor had access to the author's original papers, it is very perplexing to find 'Good night' offered as the solution of this enigma, which,

for convenience, may be distinguished as 'Sir Hilary's Prayer,' but which stands simply as No. 3 in the series. This answer, fulfilling no single requirement, one can only suppose to have been inserted at random, no possible explanation having been discovered. In one of the weekly columns of facetiæ, contributed by Albert Smith to the early numbers of the 'Illustrated London News' (1845 or 1846?), the verses are printed as 'An Enigma by Lord Byron which never had any answer.' Some two years since the 'Globe' newspaper, in several successive issues, published communications relative to the problem, but without other result than a consensus of opinion that it was and would remain insoluble. It is difficult to believe, with Albert Smith, that the enigma was a *mauvaise plaisanterie* sent forth by the author as an irritating and fruitless exercise for the mental powers of the ingenious. Certainly it would have been easy for so skilful a verse-writer as Præd to give an appearance of good faith to his lines, and convey the impression that an answer which did not really exist was only cleverly concealed. That he would do so, however, seems to the writer most improbable; and it is still his opinion that the solution which occurred to him five-and-twenty years ago meets every difficulty, requiring only the concession that the obscurity has arisen from the employment of somewhat strained metaphors.

These are the perplexing verses *in extenso* :—

1.

Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt;
 Sooth, 'twas an awful day!
 And tho' in that old age of sport
 The rufflers of the camp and court
 Had little time to pray,
 'Tis said Sir Hilary muttered there
 Two syllables by way of prayer.

2.

' My first to all the brave and proud
 Who see to-morrow's sun;
 My next, with her cold and quiet cloud,
 To those who find their dewy shroud
 Before to-day's be done;
 And both together to all blue eyes
 That weep when a warrior nobly dies.'

The answer, offered with diffidence by the writer in the face of recognised difficulties, is

‘ADIEU,’

as sounded with English pronunciation; and he supposes Praed to have selected as sufficiently corresponding in sound with the respective syllables the words

‘AID—YEW.’

Of the two French words à *Dieu* we have made, in adopting them, one word—‘adieu’—and use it to signify ‘farewell’ rather than with the true meaning ‘to God.’ If it is objected that Praed was too cultivated to employ, even for a *jeu d’esprit*, such pronunciation as aid-yew, another answer may be offered in the words

‘AIDE DIEU’

(God help),

which in sound give as closely as possible what is required.

Aide Dieu appears to have been a familiar battle-cry; and the words transposed, *Dieu aide*, form the motto of two of our noble houses, Mount-Morris and Frankfort.

Taking successively the lines of the charade which conceal the solving words, we have first—

. . . . Sir Hilary muttered there
Two syllables by way of prayer.

Answer—

‘*A Dieu*,’ to God (I commend myself and fellow-soldiers); or
‘*Aide Dieu*,’ God help us.

Next we have—

My first to all the brave and proud
Who see to-morrow’s sun.

Answer—

‘AID.’

So great was the disproportion between the contending armies that the survivors of the little English band might well be expected to require, even if victorious, aid on the morrow.

Continuing, we come to the lines which present real difficulty—

My next, with her cold and quiet cloud,
To those who find their dewy shroud
Before to-day's be done
(i.e. to-day's sun).

Answer—

‘YEW.’

This may well appear at first sight very far-fetched ; but is not the only real obstacle the word ‘cloud’? Let ‘cloud’ be taken figuratively for the shade—the chilling shade cast by the gloomy yew tree, which is so constantly associated in prose and verse with the quiet and solemnity of the churchyard, as, for example, in this line from ‘The Pleasures of Memory’—

The churchyard yews, round which his fathers sleep.

Something of this kind may then be assumed as the author's thought :—

‘May burial in the churchyard with Christian rites—poetically, rest beneath the cold and quiet shade of the churchyard yew—be the lot of those whom the evening dew shall bathe as they lie dead on the field after the battle.’

Some collateral support for this interpretation may be claimed from Wordsworth's lines on the famous yew in Lorton Vale, which, connecting the images of the gloomy yew and Agincourt, may *possibly* have suggested the charade :—

There is a yew tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single in the midst
Of its own *darkness*, as it stood of yore,
Nor loth to furnish weapons for the hands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's Heaths ; or those that crossed the seas
And drew their sounding bows at *Azincour* ;
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.
Of vast circumference and *gloom* profound
This solitary tree.

If it is objected that burial in consecrated ground could not have been possible for all the slain, it may be answered that a high officer like ‘Sir Hilary’ would naturally think of his compeers ; and in point of fact great efforts were made to remove, and

secure burial with the rites of the Church for, persons of rank, 'the brave and PROUD,' who fell in battle.

It would be easy to multiply quotations in which the yew and the churchyard are so closely connected as to justify the use of the former as a metaphor for the latter. One such from Gisborne's 'Reflections' will suffice:—

Nor shall thy reverend yew, the sire who holds
His sceptre verdant thro' the changeful year,
Unnoticed stand. He has beheld
Thousands entombed within his shadow.

Finally come the lines—

And both together to all blue eyes
That weep when a warrior nobly dies.

Answer—

'A DIEU,' or 'AIDE DIEU.'

S. T. WHITEFORD.

The Lady's Walk.

A STORY OF THE SEEN AND UNSEEN.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS on a visit to some people in Scotland when the events I am about to relate took place. They were not friends in the sense of long or habitual intercourse; in short, I had met them only in Switzerland in the previous year; but we saw a great deal of each other while we were together, and got into that cosy intimacy which travelling brings about more readily than anything else. We had seen each other in very great *déshabillé* both of mind and array in the chilly mornings after a night's travelling, which perhaps is the severest test that can be applied in respect to looks; and amid all the annoyances of journeys short and long, with the usual episodes of lost luggage, indifferent hotels, fusses of every description, which is an equally severe test for the temper; and our friendship and liking (I am at liberty to suppose it was mutual, or they would never have invited me to Ellermore) remained unimpaired. I have always thought, and still think, that Charlotte Campbell was one of the most charming young women I ever met with; and her brothers, if not so entirely delightful, were nice fellows, capital to travel with, full of fun and spirit. I understood immediately from their conversation that they were members of a large family. Their allusions to Tom and Jack and little Harry, and the children in the nursery, might perhaps have been tedious to a harsher critic; but I like to hear of other people's relations, having scarcely any of my own. I found out by degrees that Miss Campbell had been taken abroad by her brothers to recover from a long and severe task of nursing, which had exhausted her strength. The little ones had all been down with scarlet fever, and she had not left them night or day. 'She gave up seeing the rest of us and regularly shut herself in,' Charley informed me, who was the younger of the two. 'She

would only go out for her walk when all of us were out of the way. That was the worst of it,' the young fellow said, with great simplicity. That his sister should give herself up to the nursing was nothing remarkable; but that she should deny herself their precious company was a heroism that went to her brothers' hearts. Thus, by the way, I learned a great deal about the family. Chatty, as they called her, was the sister-mother, especially of the little ones, who had been left almost in her sole charge since their mother died many years before. She was not a girl, strictly speaking. She was in the perfection of her womanhood and youth—about eight-and-twenty, the age when something of the composure of maturity has lighted upon the sweetness of the earlier years, and being so old enhances all the charm of being so young. It is chiefly among young married women that one sees this gracious and beautiful type, delightful to every sense and every requirement of the mind; but when it is to be met with unmarried it is more celestial still. I cannot but think with reverence that this delicate maternity and maidenhood—the perfect bounty of the one, the undisturbed grace of the other—has been the foundation of that adoring devotion which in the old days brought so many saints to the shrine of the Virgin Mother. But why I should thus enlarge upon Charlotte Campbell at the beginning of this story I can scarcely tell, for she is not in the strict sense of the word the heroine of it, and I am unintentionally deceiving the reader to begin.

They asked me to come and see them at Ellermore when we parted, and, as I have nothing in the way of a home warmer or more genial than chambers in the Temple, I accepted, as may be supposed, with enthusiasm. It was in the first week of June that we parted, and I was invited for the end of August. They had 'plenty of grouse,' Charley said, with a liberality of expression which was pleasant to hear. Charlotte added, 'But you must be prepared for a homely life, Mr. Temple, and a very quiet one.' I replied, of course, that if I had chosen what I liked best in the world it would have been this combination: at which she smiled with an amused little shake of her head. It did not seem to occur to her that she herself told for much in the matter. What they all insisted upon was the 'plenty of grouse;' and I do not pretend to say that I was indifferent to that.

Colin, the eldest son, was the one with whom I had been least familiar. He was what people call reserved. He did not talk of everything as the others did. I did not indeed find out till much

later that he was constantly in London, coming and going, so that he and I might have seen much of each other. Yet he liked me well enough. He joined warmly in his brother's invitation. When Charley said there was plenty of grouse, he added with the utmost friendliness, 'And ye may get a blaze at a stag.' There was a flavour of the North in the speech of all; not disclosed by mere words, but by an occasional diversity of idiom and change of pronunciation. They were conscious of this and rather proud of it than otherwise. They did not say Scotch, but Scots; and their accent could not be represented by any of the travesties of the theatre, or what we conventionally accept as the national utterance. When I attempted to pronounce after them, my own ear informed me what a travesty it was.

It was to the family represented by these young people that I was going when I started on August 20, a blazing summer day, with dust and heat enough to merit the name of summer if anything ever did. But when I arrived at my journey's end there was just change enough to mark the line between summer and autumn: a little golden haze in the air, a purple bloom of heather on the hills, a touch here and there upon a stray branch, very few, yet enough to swear by. Ellermore lay in the heart of a beautiful district full of mountains and lochs, within the Highland line, and just on the verge of some of the wildest mountain scenery in Scotland. It was situated in the midst of an amphitheatre of hills, not of any very exalted height, but of the most picturesque form, with peaks and couloirs like an Alpine range in little, all glowing with the purple blaze of the heather, with gleams upon them that looked like snow, but were in reality water, white threads of mountain torrents. In front of the house was a small loch embosomed in the hills, from one end of which ran a cheerful little stream, much intercepted by boulders, and much the brighter for the interruptions, which meandered through the glen and fell into another loch of greater grandeur and pretensions. Ellermore itself was a comparatively new house, built upon a fine slope of lawn over the lake, and sheltered by fine trees—great beeches which would not have done discredit to Berkshire, though that is not what we expect to see in Scotland: besides the ashes and firs which we are ready to acknowledge as of northern growth. I was not prepared for the luxuriance of the West Highlands—the mantling green of ferns and herbage everywhere, not to say the wealth of flowers, which formed a centre of still more brilliant colour and cultivation amid all the purple of the hills.

Everything was soft and rich and warm about the Highland mansion-house. I had expected stern scenery and a grey atmosphere. I found an almost excessive luxuriance of vegetation and colour everywhere. The father of my friends received me at a door which was constantly open, and where it seemed to me after a while that nobody was ever refused admission. He was a tall old man, dignified but homely, with white hair and moustache and the fresh colour of a rural patriarch, which, however, he was not, but an energetic man of business, as I afterwards found. The Campbells of Ellermore were not great chiefs in that much-extended clan, but they were perfectly well known people and had held their little estate from remote antiquity. But they had not stood upon their gentility, or refused to avail themselves of the opportunities that came in their way. I have observed that in the great and wealthy region of which Glasgow is the capital the number of the irreconcilables who stand out against trade is few. The gentry have seen all the advantages of combining commerce with tradition. Had it not been for this it is likely that Ellermore would have been a very different place. Now it was overflowing with all those signs of ease and simple luxury which make life so smooth. There was little show, but there was a profusion of comfort. Everything rolled upon velvet. It was perhaps more like the house of a rich merchant than of a family of long descent. Nothing could be more perfect as a pleasure estate than was this little Highland property. They had 'plenty of grouse,' and also of trout in a succession of little lochs and mountain streams. They had deer on the hills. They had their own mutton, and everything vegetable that was needed for the large profuse household, from potatoes and cabbage up to grapes and peaches. But with all this primitive wealth there was not much money got out of Ellermore. The 'works' in Glasgow supplied that. What the works were I have never exactly found out, but they afforded occupation for all the family, both father and sons; and that the results were of the most pleasing description as regarded Mr. Campbell's banker it was easy to see.

They were all at home with the exception of Colin, the eldest son, for whose absence many apologies, some of which seemed much more elaborate than were at all necessary, were made to me. I was for my own part quite indifferent to the absence of Colin. He was not the one who had interested me most; and though Charley was considerably younger than myself, I had liked him better from the first. Tom and Jack were still younger. They

were all occupied at 'the works,' and came home only from Saturday to Monday. The little trio in the nursery were delightful children. To see them gathered about Charlotte was enough to melt any heart. Chatty they called her, which is not a very dignified name, but I got to think it the most beautiful in the world as it sounded all over that cheerful, much-populated house. 'Where is Chatty?' was the first question everyone asked as he came in at the door. If she was not immediately found it went volleying through the house, all up the stairs and through the passages—'Chatty! where are you?'—and was always answered from somewhere or other in a full soft voice, which was audible everywhere though it never was loud. 'Here am I, boys,' she would say, with a pretty inversion which pleased me. Indeed, everything pleased me in Chatty—too much, more than reason. I found myself thinking what would become of them all if, for example, she were to marry, and entered into a hot argument with myself on one occasion by way of proving that it would be the most selfish thing in the world were this family to work upon Chatty's feelings and prevent her from marrying, as most probably, I could not help feeling, they would. At the same time I perceived with a little shudder how entirely the whole thing would collapse if by any chance Chatty should be decoyed away.

I enjoyed my stay beyond description. In the morning we were out on the hills or about the country. In the evening it very often happened that we all strolled out after dinner, and that I was left by Chatty's side, 'the boys' having a thousand objects of interest, while Mr. Campbell usually sat in his library and read the newspapers, which arrived at that time either by the coach from Oban or by the boat. In this way I went over the whole 'policy,' as the grounds surrounding a country house are called in Scotland, with Chatty, who would not be out of reach at this hour, lest her father should want her, or the children. She would bid me not to stay with her when no doubt it would be more amusing for me to go with the boys; and when I assured her my pleasure was far greater as it was, she gave me a gracious, frank smile, with a little shake of her head. She laughed at me softly, bidding me not to be too polite or think she would mind if I left her; but I think, on the whole, she liked to have me with her in her evening walk.

'There is one thing you have not told me of,' I said, 'and that you must possess. I cannot believe that your family has been settled here so long without having a ghost.'

She had turned round to look at me, to know what it was that had been omitted in her descriptions. When she heard what it was she smiled a little, but not with the pleasant mockery I had expected. On the contrary, it was a sort of gentle smile of recognition that something had been left out.

'We don't call it a ghost,' she said. 'I have wondered if you had never noticed. I am fond of it for my part; but then I have been used to it all my life. And here we are, then,' she added as we reached the top of a little ascent and came out upon a raised avenue, which I had known by its name of the Lady's Walk without as yet getting any explanation what that meant. It must have been, I supposed, the avenue to the old house, and now encircled one portion of the grounds without any distinct meaning. On the side nearest the gardens and house it was but slightly raised above the shrubberies, but on the other side was the summit of a high bank sloping steeply to the river, which, after it escaped from the loch, made a wide bend round that portion of the grounds. A row of really grand beeches rose on each side of the path, and through the openings in the trees the house, the bright gardens, the silvery gleam of the loch were visible. The evening sun was slanting into our eyes as we walked along; a little soft yet brisk air was pattering among the leaves, and here and there a yellow cluster in the middle of a branch showing the first touch of a cheerful decay. 'Here we are, then.' It was a curious phrase; but there are some odd idioms in the Scotch—I mean Scots—form of our common language, and I had become accustomed now to accept them without remark.

'I suppose,' I said, 'there must be some back way to the village or to the farm house under this bank, though there seems no room for a path?'

'Why do you ask?' she said, looking at me with a smile.

'Because I always hear some one passing along—I imagine down there. The steps are very distinct. Don't you hear them now? It has puzzled me a good deal, for I cannot make out where the path can be.'

She smiled again, with a meaning in her smile, and looked at me steadily, listening, as I was. And then, after a pause, she said, 'That is what you were asking for. If we did not hear it, it would make us unhappy. Did you not know why this was called the Lady's Walk?'

When she said these words I was conscious of an odd enough change in my sensations—nay, I should say in my very sense of

hearing, which was the one appealed to. I had heard the sound often, and, after looking back at first to see who it was and seeing no one, had made up my mind that the steps were on some unseen bye-way and heard them accordingly, feeling quite sure that the sound came from below. Now my hearing changed, and I could not understand how I had ever thought anything else: the steps were on a level with us, by our side—as if some third person were accompanying us along the avenue. I am no believer in ghosts, nor the least superstitious, so far as I had ever been aware (more than everybody is), but I felt myself get out of the way with some celerity and a certain thrill of curious sensation. The idea of rubbing shoulders with something unseen startled me in spite of myself.

‘Ah!’ said Charlotte, ‘it gives you an—unpleasant feeling. I forgot you are not used to it like me.’

‘I am tolerably well used to it, for I have heard it often,’ I said, somewhat ashamed of my involuntary movement. Then I laughed, which I felt to be altogether out of place and fictitious, and said, ‘No doubt there is some very easy explanation of it—some vibration or echo. The science of acoustics clears up many mysteries.’

‘There is no explanation,’ Chatty said, almost angrily. ‘She has walked here far longer than anyone can remember. It is an ill sign for us Campbells when she goes away. She was the eldest daughter, like me; and I think she has got to be our guardian angel. There is no harm going to happen as long as she is here. Listen to her,’ she cried, standing still with her hand raised. The low sun shone full on her, catching her brown hair, the lucid clearness of her brown eyes, her cheeks so clear and soft, in colour a little summer-brown, too. I stood and listened with a something of excited feeling which I could not control: the sound of this third person, whose steps were not to be mistaken though she was unseen, made my heart beat: if, indeed, it was not merely the presence of my companion, who was sweet enough to account for any man’s emotion.

‘You are startled,’ she said with a smile.

‘Well! I should not be acting my part, should I, as I ought, if I did not feel the proper thrill? It must be disrespectful to a ghost not to be afraid.’

‘Don’t say a ghost,’ said Chatty; ‘I think *that* is disrespectful. It is the Lady of Ellermore; everybody knows about her. And do you know,’ she added, ‘when my mother died—the greatest grief

I have ever known—the steps ceased? Oh! it is true! You need not look me in the face as if there was anything to laugh at. It is ten years ago, and I was only a silly sort of girl, not much good to anyone. They sent me out to get the air when she was lying in a doze; and I came here. I was crying, as you may suppose, and at first I did not pay any attention. Then it struck me all at once—the Lady was away. They told me afterwards that was the worst sign. It is always death that is coming when she goes away.'

The pathos of this incident confused all my attempts to touch it with levity, and we went on for a little without speaking, during which time it is almost unnecessary to say that I was listening with all my might to those strange footsteps, which finally I persuaded myself were no more than echoes of our own.

'It is very curious,' I said politely. 'Of course you were greatly agitated and too much absorbed in real grief to have any time to think of the other: and there might be something in the state of the atmosphere——'

She gave me an indignant look. We were nearly at the end of the walk; and at that moment I could have sworn that the footsteps, which had got a little in advance, here turned and met us going back. I am aware that nothing could sound more foolish, and that it must have been some vibration or atmospheric phenomenon. But yet this was how it seemed—not an optical but an aural delusion. So long as the steps were going with us it was less impossible to account for it; but when they turned and audibly came back to meet us! Not all my scepticism could prevent me from stepping aside to let them pass. This time they came directly between us, and the naturalness of my withdrawal out of the way was more significant than the faltering laugh with which I excused myself. 'It is a very curious sound indeed,' I said with a tremor which slightly affected my voice.

Chatty gave me a reassuring smile. She did not laugh at me, which was consolatory. She stood for a moment as if looking after the visionary passenger. 'We are not afraid,' she said, 'even the youngest; we all know she is our friend.'

When we had got back to the side of the loch, where, I confess, I was pleased to find myself, in the free open air without any perplexing shadow of trees, I felt less objection to the subject. 'I wish you would tell me the story; for of course there is a story,' I said.

'No, there is no story—at least nothing tragical or even romantic. They say she was the eldest daughter. I sometimes wonder,' Chatty said with a smile and a faint increase of colour, 'whether she might not be a little like me. She lived here all her life, and had several generations to take care of. Oh no, there was no murder or wrong about our Lady; she just loved Ellermore above everything; but my idea is that she has been allowed the care of us ever since.'

'That is very sweet, to have the care of you,' I said, scarcely venturing to put any emphasis on the pronoun; 'but, after all, it must be slow work, don't you think, walking up and down there for ever? I call that a poor sort of reward for a good woman. If she had been a bad one it might have answered very well for a punishment.'

'Mr. Temple!' Chatty said, now reddening with indignation, 'do you think it is a poor thing to have the care of your own people, to watch over them, whatever may happen—to be all for them and their service? I don't think so; I should like to have such a fate.'

Perhaps I had spoken thus on purpose to bring about the discussion. 'There is such a thing as being too devoted to your family. Are they ever grateful? They go away and marry and leave you in the lurch.'

She looked up at me with a little astonishment. 'The members may vary, but the family never goes away,' she said; 'besides, that can apply to us in our present situation only. *She* must have seen so many come and go; but that need not vex her, you know, because they go where she is.'

'My dear Miss Campbell, wait a bit, think a little,' I said: 'where she is! That is in the Lady's Walk, according to your story. Let us hope that all your ancestors and relations are not there.'

'I suppose you want to make me angry,' said Chatty. 'She is in heaven—have you any doubt of that?—but every day when the sun is setting she comes back home.'

'Oh, come!' I said, 'if it is only at the sunset that is not so bad.'

Miss Campbell looked at me doubtfully, as if not knowing whether to be angry. 'You want to make fun of it,' she said, 'to laugh at it; and yet,' she added with a little spirit, 'you were rather nervous half an hour ago.'

'I acknowledge to being nervous. I am very impressionable.

I believe that is the word. It is a luxury to be nervous at the fit moment. Frightened you might say, if you prefer plain speaking. And I am very glad it is at sunset, not in the dark. This completes the round of my Highland experiences,' I said; 'everything now is perfect. I have shot grouse on the hill and caught trout on the loch, and been soaked to the skin and then dried in the wind; I wanted nothing but the family ghost. And now I have seen her, or at least heard her——'

'If you are resolved to make a joke of it I cannot help it,' said Chatty, 'but I warn you that it is not agreeable to me, Mr. Temple. Let us talk of something else. In the Highlands,' she said with dignity, 'we take different views of many things.'

'There are some things,' I said, 'of which but one view is possible—that I should have the audacity and impertinence to laugh at anything for which you have a veneration! I believe it is only because I was so frightened——'

She smiled again in her lovely motherly way, a smile of indulgence and forgiveness and bounty. 'You are too humble now,' she said, 'and I think I hear some one calling me. It is time to go in.'

And to be sure there was some one calling her: there always was, I think, at all hours of the night and day.

CHAPTER II.

To say that I got rid of the recollection of the Lady of Ellermore when I went upstairs after a cheerful evening through a long and slippery gallery to my room in the wing would be untrue. The curious experience I had just had dwelt in my mind with a feeling of not unpleasant perplexity. Of course, I said to myself, there must be something to account for those footsteps—some hidden way in which the sounds could come. Perhaps my first idea would turn out to be correct—that there was a bye-road to the farm, or to the stables, which in some states of the atmosphere—or perhaps it might even be always—echoed back the sounds of passing feet in some subterranean vibration. One has heard of such things; one has heard, indeed, of every kind of natural wonder, some of them no more easy to explain than the other kind of prodigy; but so long as you have science with you, whether you understand it or not, you are all right. I could not help

wondering, however, whether, if by chance I heard those steps in the long gallery outside my door, I should refer the matter comfortably to the science of acoustics. I was tormented, until I fell asleep, by a vague expectation of hearing them. I could not get them out of my mind or out of my ears, so distinct were they—the light step, soft but with energy in it, evidently a woman's step. I could not help recollecting, with a tingling sensation through all my veins, the distinctness of the turn it gave—the coming back, the steps going in a line opposite to ours. It seemed to me that from moment to moment I must hear it again in the gallery, and then how could it be explained?

Next day—for I slept very well after I had succeeded in getting to sleep, and what I had heard did not by any means haunt my dreams—next day I managed to elude all the pleasant occupations of the house, and, as soon as I could get free from observation, I took my way to the Lady's Walk. I had said that I had letters to write—a well-worn phrase, which of course means exactly what one pleases. I walked up and down the Lady's Walk, and could neither hear nor see anything. On this side of the shrubbery there was no possibility of any concealed path; on the other side the bank went sloping to the water's edge. The avenue ran along from the corner of the loch half-way round the green plateau on which the house was planted, and at the upper end came out upon the elevated ground behind the house; but no road crossed it, nor was there the slightest appearance of any mode by which a steady sound not its own could be communicated here. I examined it all with the utmost care, looking behind the bole of every tree as if the secret might be there, and my heart gave a leap when I perceived what seemed to me one narrow track worn along the ground. Fancy plays us curious pranks even when she is most on her guard. It was a strange idea that I, who had come here with the purpose of finding a way of explaining the curious phenomenon upon which so long and lasting a superstition had been built, should be so quickly infected by it. I saw the little track, quite narrow but very distinct, and though of course I did not believe in the Lady of Ellermore, yet within myself I jumped at the certainty that this was her track. It gave me a curious sensation. The certainty lay underneath the scepticism as if they were two things which had no connection with each other. Had anyone seen me it must have been supposed that I was looking for something among the bushes, so closely did I scrutinise every foot of the soil and every tree.

It exercised a fascination upon me which I could not resist. The Psychical Society did not exist in those days, so far as I know, but there are many minds outside that inquisitive body to whom the authentication of a ghost story, or, to speak more practically, the clearing up of a superstition, is very attractive. I managed to elude the family arrangements once more at the same hour at which Miss Campbell and I had visited the Lady's Walk on the previous evening. It was a lovely evening, soft and warm, the western sky all ablaze with colour, the great branches of the beeches thrown out in dark maturity of greenness upon the flush of orange and crimson melting into celestial rosy red as it rose higher, and flinging itself in airy masses rose-tinted across the serene blue above. The same wonderful colours glowed in reflection out of the loch. The air was of magical clearness, and earth and sky seemed stilled with an almost awe of their own loveliness, happiness, and peace.

The holy time was quiet as a nun,
Breathless with adoration.

For my part, however, I noticed this only in passing, being intent on other thoughts. From the loch there came a soft tumult of voices. It was Saturday evening, and all the boys were at home. They were getting out the boats for an evening row, and the white sail of the toy yacht rose upon the gleaming water like a little white cloud among the rosy clouds of that resplendent sky. I stood between two of the beeches that formed a sort of arch, and looked out upon them, distracted for an instant by the pleasant distant sound which came softly through the summer air. Next moment I turned sharply round with a start, in spite of myself—turned quickly to see who it was coming after me. There was, I need not say, not a soul within sight. The beech leaves fluttered softly in the warm air; the long shadows of their great boles lay unbroken along the path; nothing else was visible, not even a bird on a bough. I stood breathless between the two trees, with my back turned to the loch, gazing at nothing, while the soft footsteps came quietly on, and crossed me—passed me! with a slight waft of air, I thought, such as a slight figure might have made; but that was imagination perhaps. Imagination! was it not all imagination? or what was it? No shadows or darkness to conceal a passing form by; full light of day radiant with colour; the most living delightful air, all sweet with pleasure. I stood there speechless and without power

to move. They went along softly, without changing the gentle regularity of the tread, to the end of the walk, growing fainter as they went further and further from me. I never listened so intently in my life. I said to myself, 'If they go out of hearing I shall know it is merely an excited imagination.' And on they went, almost out of hearing, only the faintest touch upon the ground; then there was a momentary pause, and my heart stood still, but leaped again to my throat and sent wild waves of throbbing to my ears next moment: they had turned and were coming back.

I cannot describe the extraordinary effect. If it had been dark it would have been altogether different. The brightness, the life around, the absence of all that one associates with the supernatural, produced a thrill of emotion to which I can give no name. It was not fear; yet my heart beat as it had never in any dangerous emergency (and I have passed through some that were exciting enough) beat before. It was simple excitement, I suppose; and in the commotion of my mind I instinctively changed the pronoun which I had hitherto used, and asked myself, would *she* come back? She did, passing me once more, with the same movement of the air (or so I thought). But by that time my pulses were all clanging in my ears, and perhaps the sense itself became confused with listening. I turned and walked precipitately away, descending the little slope and losing myself in the shrubberies which were beneath the range of the low sun, now almost set, and felt dank and cold in the contrast. It was something like plunging into a bath of cold air after the warmth and glory above.

It was in this way that my first experience ended. Miss Campbell looked at me a little curiously with a half-smile when I joined the party at the lochside. She divined where I had been, and perhaps something of the agitation I felt, but she took no further notice; and as I was in time to find a place in the boat, where she had established herself with the children, I lost nothing by my meeting with the mysterious passenger in the Lady's Walk.

I did not go near the place for some days afterwards, but I cannot say that it was ever long out of my thoughts. I had long arguments with myself on the subject, representing to myself that I had heard the sound before hearing the superstition, and then had found no difficulty in believing that it was the sound of some passenger on an adjacent path, perhaps invisible from the Walk. I had not been able to find that path, but still it might exist at some angle which, according to the natural law of the transmission of sounds—Bah! what jargon this was! Had I

not heard *her* turn, felt her pass me, watched her coming back? And then I paused with a loud burst of laughter at myself. 'Ass! you never had any of these sensations before you heard the story,' I said. And that was true; but I heard the steps before I heard the story; and, now I think of it, was much startled by them, and set my mind to work to account for them, as you know. 'And what evidence have you that the first interpretation was not the right one?' myself asked me with scorn; upon which question I turned my back with a hopeless contempt of the pertinacity of that other person who has always so many objections to make. Interpretation! could any interpretation ever do away with the effect upon my actual senses of that invisible passer-by? But the most disagreeable effect was this, that I could not shut out from my mind the expectation of hearing those same steps in the gallery outside my door at night. It was a long gallery running the full length of the wing, highly polished and somewhat slippery, a place in which any sound was important. I never went along to my room without a feeling that at any moment I might hear those steps behind me, or after I had closed my door might be conscious of them passing. I never did so, but neither have I ever got free of the thought.

A few days after, however, another incident occurred that drove the Lady's Walk and its invisible visitor out of my mind. We were all returning home in the long northern twilight from a mountain expedition. How it was that I was the last to return I do not exactly recollect. I think Miss Campbell had forgotten to give some directions to the coachman's wife at the lodge, which I volunteered to carry for her. My nearest way back would have been through the Lady's Walk, had not some sort of doubtful feeling restrained me from taking it. Though I have said and felt that the effect of these mysterious footsteps was enhanced by the full daylight, still I had a sort of natural reluctance to put myself in the way of encountering them when the darkness began to fall. I preferred the shrubberies, though they were darker and less attractive. As I came out of their shade, however, some one whom I had never seen before—a lady—met me, coming apparently from the house. It was almost dark, and what little light there was was behind her, so that I could not distinguish her features. She was tall and slight, and wrapped apparently in a long cloak, a dress usual enough in those rainy regions. I think, too, that her veil was over her face. The way in which she approached made it apparent that she was going to speak to

me, which surprised me a little, though there was nothing extraordinary in it, for of course by this time all the neighbourhood knew who I was and that I was a visitor at Ellermore. There was a little air of timidity and hesitation about her as she came forward, from which I supposed that my sudden appearance startled her a little, and yet was welcome as an unexpected way of getting something done that she wanted. *Tant de choses en un mot*, you will say—nay, without a word—and yet it was quite true. She came up to me quickly as soon as she had made up her mind. Her voice was very soft, but very peculiar, with a sort of far-away sound as if the veil or evening air interposed a visionary distance between her and me. ‘If you are a friend to the Campbells,’ she said, ‘will you tell them——’ then paused a little and seemed to look at me with eyes that shone dimly through the shadows like stars in a misty sky.

‘I am a warm friend to the Campbells; I am living there,’ I said.

‘Will you tell them—the father and Charlotte—that Colin is in great trouble and temptation, and that if they would save him they should lose no time?’

‘Colin!’ I said, startled; then, after a moment, ‘Pardon me, this is an uncomfortable message to entrust to a stranger. Is he ill? I am very sorry, but don’t let me make them anxious without reason. What is the matter? He was all right when they last heard——’

‘It is not without reason,’ she said; ‘I must not say more. Tell them just this—in great trouble and temptation. They may perhaps save him yet if they lose no time.’

‘But stop,’ I said, for she seemed about to pass on. ‘If I am to say this there must be something more. May I ask who it is that sends the message? They will ask me, of course. And what is wrong?’

She seemed to wring her hands under her cloak, and looked at me with an attitude and gesture of supplication. ‘In great trouble,’ she said, ‘in great trouble! and tempted beyond his strength. And not such as I can help. Tell them, if you wish well to the Campbells. I must not say more.’

And, notwithstanding all that I could say, she left me so, with a wave of her hand, disappearing among the dark bushes. It may be supposed that this was no agreeable charge to give to a guest, one who owed nothing but pleasure and kindness to the Campbells, but had no acquaintance beyond the surface with

their concerns. They were, it is true, very free in speech, and seemed to have as little *dessous des cartes* in their life and affairs as could be imagined. But Colin was the one who was spoken of less freely than any other in the family. He had been expected several times since I came, but had never appeared. It seemed that he had a way of postponing his arrival, and 'of course,' it was said in the family, never came when he was expected. I had wondered more than once at the testy tone in which the old gentleman spoke of him sometimes, and the line of covert defence always adopted by Charlotte. To be sure he was the eldest, and might naturally assume a more entire independence of action than the other young men, who were yet scarcely beyond the time of pupillage and in their father's house.

But from this as well as from the still more natural and apparent reason that to bring them bad news of any kind was most disagreeable and inappropriate on my part, the commission I had so strangely received hung very heavily upon me. I turned it over in my mind as I dressed for dinner (we had been out all day, and dinner was much later than usual in consequence) with great perplexity and distress. Was I bound to give a message forced upon me in such a way? If the lady had news of any importance to give, why did she turn away from the house, where she could have communicated it at once, and confide it to a stranger? On the other hand, should I be justified in keeping back anything that might be of so much importance to them? It might perhaps be something for which she did not wish to give her authority. Sometimes people in such circumstances will even condescend to write an anonymous letter to give the warning they think necessary, without betraying to the victims of misfortune that anyone whom they know is acquainted with it. Here was a justification for the strange step she had taken. It might be done in the utmost kindness to them, if not to me; and what if there might be some real danger afloat and Colin be in peril, as she said? I thought over these things anxiously before I went downstairs, but even to the moment of entering that bright and genial drawing-room, so full of animated faces and cheerful talk, I had not made up my mind what I should do. When we returned to it after dinner I was still uncertain. It was late, and the children had been sent to bed. The boys went round to the stables to see that the horses were not the worse for their day's work. Mr. Campbell retired to his library. For a little while I was left alone, a thing that very rarely happened. Presently Miss Campbell came downstairs from

the children's rooms, with that air about her of rest and sweetness, like a reflection of the little prayers she has been hearing and the infant repose which she has left, which hangs about a young mother when she has disposed her babies to sleep. Charlotte, by her right of being no mother, but only a voluntary mother by deputy, had a still more tender light about her in the sweetness of this duty which God and her goodwill, not simple nature, had put upon her. She came softly into the room with her shining countenance. 'Are you alone, Mr. Temple?' she said with a little surprise. 'How rude of those boys to leave you,' and came and drew her chair towards the table where I was, in the kindness of her heart.

'I am very glad they have left me if I may have a little talk with you,' I said; and then before I knew I had told her. She was the kind of woman to whom it is a relief to tell whatever may be on your heart. The fact that my commission was to her, had really less force with me in telling it, than the ease to myself. She, however, was very much surprised and disturbed. 'Colin in trouble? Oh, that might very well be,' she said, then stopped herself. 'You are his friend,' she said; 'you will not misunderstand me, Mr. Temple. He is very independent, and not so open as the rest of us. That is nothing against him. We are all rather given to talking; we keep nothing to ourselves—except Colin. And then he is more away than the rest.' The first necessity in her mind seemed to be this, of defending the absent. Then came the question, From whom could the warning be? Charley came in at this moment, and she called him to her eagerly. 'Here is a very strange thing happened. Somebody came up to Mr. Temple in the shrubbery and told him to tell us that Colin was in trouble.'

'Colin!' I could see that Charley was, as Charlotte had been, more distressed than surprised. 'When did you hear from him last?' he said.

'On Monday; but the strange thing is, who could it be that sent such a message? You said a lady, Mr. Temple?'

'What like was she?' said Charley.

Then I described as well as I could. 'She was tall and very slight; wrapped up in a cloak, so that I could not make out much, and her veil down. And it was almost dark.'

'It is clear she did not want to be recognised,' Charley said.

'There was something peculiar about her voice, but I really cannot describe it, a strange tone unlike anything——'

‘Marion Gray has a peculiar voice; she is tall and slight. But what could she know about Colin?’

‘I will tell you who is more likely,’ cried Charley, ‘and that is Susie Cameron. Her brother is in London now; they may have heard from him.’

‘Oh! Heaven forbid! oh! Heaven forbid! the Camerons of all people!’ Charlotte cried, wringing her hands. The action struck me as so like that of the veiled stranger that it gave me a curious shock. I had not time to follow out the vague, strange suggestion that it seemed to breathe into my mind, but the sensation was as if I had suddenly, groping, came upon some one in the dark.

‘Whoever it was,’ I said, ‘she was not indifferent, but full of concern and interest——’

‘Susie would be that,’ Charley said, looking significantly at his sister, who rose from her chair in great distress.

‘I would telegraph to him at once,’ she said, ‘but it is too late to-night.’

‘And what good would it do to telegraph? If he is in trouble it would be no help to him.’

‘But what can I do? what else can I do?’ she cried. I had plunged them into sudden misery, and could only look on now as an anxious but helpless spectator, feeling at the same time as if I had intruded myself upon a family affliction: for it was evident that they were not at all unprepared for ‘trouble’ to Colin. I felt my position very embarrassing, and rose to go away.

‘I feel miserably guilty,’ I said, ‘as if I had been the bearer of bad news; but I am sure you will believe that I would not for anything in the world intrude upon——’

Charlotte paused to give me a pale sort of smile, and pointed to the chair I had left. ‘No, no,’ she said, ‘don’t go away, Mr. Temple. We do not conceal from you that we are anxious—that we were anxious even before—but don’t go away. I don’t think I will tell my father, Charley. It would break his rest. Let him have his night’s rest whatever happens; and there is nothing to be done to-night——’

‘We will see what the post brings to-morrow,’ Charley said.

And then the consultation ended abruptly by the sudden entrance of the boys, bringing a gust of fresh night air with them. The horses were not a preen the worse though they had been out all day; even old grumbling Geordie, the coachman, had not a word to say. ‘You may have them again to-morrow, Chatty, if you like,’ said Tom. She had sat down to her work, and met their

eyes with an unruffled countenance. 'I hope I am not so unreasonable,' she said with her tranquil looks; only I could see a little tremor in her hand as she stooped over the socks she was knitting. She laid down her work after a while, and went to the piano and played accompaniments, while first Jack and then Tom sang. She did it without any appearance of effort, yielding to all the wishes of the youngsters, while I looked on wondering, How can women do this sort of thing? It is more than one can divine.

Next morning Mr. Campbell asked 'by the bye,' but with a pucker in his forehead, which, being now enlightened on the subject, I could understand, if there was any letter from Colin? 'No,' Charlotte said (who for her part had turned over all her letters with a swift, anxious scrutiny). 'But that is nothing,' she said, 'for we heard on Monday.' The old gentleman uttered an 'Umph!' of displeasure. 'Tell him I think it a great want in manners that he is not here to receive Mr. Temple.' 'Oh, father, Mr. Temple understands,' cried Charlotte; and she turned upon me those mild eyes, in which there was now a look that went to my heart, an appeal at once to my sympathy and my forbearance, bidding me not to ask, not to speak, yet to feel with her all the same. If she could have known the rush of answering feeling with which my heart replied! but I had to be careful not even to *look* too much knowledge, too much sympathy.

After this two days passed without any incident. What letters were sent, or other communications, to Colin I could not tell. They were great people for the telegraph and flashed messages about continually. There was a telegraph station in the little village, which had been very surprising to me at first, but I no longer wondered, seeing their perpetual use of it. People who have to do with business, with great 'works' to manage, get into the way more easily than we others. But either no answer or nothing of a satisfactory character was obtained, for I was told no more. The second evening was Sunday, and I was returning alone from a ramble down the glen. It was Mr. Campbell's custom to read a sermon on Sunday evenings to his household, and as I had, in conformity to the custom of the family, already heard two, I had deserted on this occasion, and chosen the freedom and quiet of a rural walk instead. It was a cloudy evening, and there had been rain. The clouds hung low on the hills, and half the surrounding peaks had retired altogether into the mist. I had scarcely set foot within the gates when I met once more the lady

whose message had brought so much pain. The trees arched over the approach at this spot, and even in full daylight it was in deep shade. Now in the evening dimness it was dark as night. I could see little more than the slim straight figure, the sudden perception of which gave me—I could scarcely tell why—a curious thrill of something like fear. She came hurriedly towards me, an outline, nothing more, until the same peculiar voice, sweet but shrill, broke the silence. ‘Did you tell them?’ she said.

It cost me an effort to reply calmly. My heart had begun to beat with an excitement over which I had no control, like a horse that takes fright at something which its rider cannot see. I said, ‘Yes, I told them,’ straining my eyes, yet feeling as if my faculties were restive like that same horse and would not obey me, would not look or examine her appearance as I desired. But indeed it would have been in vain, for it was too dark to see.

‘But nothing has been done,’ she said. ‘Did they think I would come for nothing?’ And there was again that movement, the same as I had seen in Charlotte, of wringing her hands.

‘Pardon me,’ I said, ‘but if you will tell me who you are? I am a stranger here; no doubt if you would see Miss Campbell herself, or if she knew who it was——’

I felt the words somehow arrested in my throat, I could not tell why; and she drew back from me with a sudden movement. It is hard to characterise a gesture in the dark, but there seemed to be a motion of impatience and despair in it. ‘Tell them again Colin wants them. He is in sore trouble, trouble that is nigh death.’

‘I will carry your message; but for God’s sake if it is so important tell me who sends it,’ I said.

She shook her head and went rapidly past me, notwithstanding the anxious appeals that I tried to make. She seemed to put out a hand to wave me back as I stood gazing after her. Just then the lodge door opened. I suppose the woman within had been disturbed by the sound of the voices, and a gleam of fire-light burst out upon the road. Across this gleam I saw the slight figure pass quickly, and then a capacious form with a white apron came out and stood in the door. The sight of the coachman’s wife in her large and comfortable proportions gave me a certain ease, I cannot tell why. I hurried up to her. ‘Who was that that passed just now?’ I asked.

‘That passed just now? There was naeboddy passed. I thought I heard a voice, and that it was maybe Geordie; but nobody has passed here that I could see.’

'Nonsense! you must have seen her,' I cried hastily; 'she cannot be out of sight yet. No doubt you would know who she was—a lady tall and slight—in a cloak——'

'Eh, sir, ye maun be joking,' cried the woman. 'What lady, if it werna Miss Charlotte, would be walking here at this time of the night? Lady! it might be, maybe, the schoolmaster's daughter. She has one of those ulsters like her betters. But nobody has passed here this hour back; o' that I'm confident,' she said.

'Why did you come out, then, just at this moment?' I cried. The woman contemplated me in the gleam from the fire from top to toe. 'You're the English gentleman that's biding up at the house?' she said. 'Deed, I just heard a step, that was nae doubt your step, and I thought it might be my man; but there has naeboddy, far less a lady, whatever she had on, passed my door coming or going. Is that you, Geordie?' she cried suddenly as a step became audible approaching the gate from the outer side.

'Ay, it's just me,' responded her husband out of the gloom.

'Have ye met a lady as ye came along? The gentleman here will have it that there's been a lady passing the gate, and there's been no lady. I would have seen her through the window even if I hadna opened the door.'

'I've seen no lady,' said Geordie, letting himself in with considerable noise at the foot entrance, which I now remembered to have closed behind me when I passed through it a few minutes before. 'I've met no person; it's no an hour for ladies to be about the roads on Sabbath day at e'en.'

It was not till this moment that a strange fancy, which I will explain hereafter, darted into my mind. How it came I cannot tell. I was not the sort of man, I said to myself, for any such folly. My imagination had been a little touched, to be sure, by that curious affair of the footsteps; but this, which seemed to make my heart stand still and sent a shiver through me, was very different, and it was a folly not to be entertained for a moment. I stamped my foot upon it instantly, crushing it on the threshold of the mind. 'Apparently either you or I must be mistaken,' I said with a laugh at the high tone of Geordie, who himself had evidently been employed in a jovial way—quite consistent, according to all I had heard, with very fine principles in respect to the Sabbath. I had a laugh over this as I went away, insisting upon the joke to myself as I hurried up the avenue. It was extremely funny, I said to myself; it would be a capital story among my other Scotch experiences. But somehow my laugh died away in a very feeble sort of

quaver. The night had grown dark even when I emerged from under the trees, by reason of a great cloud, full of rain, which had rolled up over the sky, quenching it out. I was very glad to see the lights of the house gleaming steadily before me. The blind had not been drawn over the end window of the drawing-room, and from the darkness without I looked in upon a scene which was full of warmth and household calm. Though it was August there was a little glimmer of fire. The reading of the sermon was over. Old Mr. Campbell still sat at a little table with the book before him, but it was closed. Charlotte in the foreground, with little Harry and Mary on either side of her, was 'hearing their Paraphrase.'¹ The boys were putting a clever dog through his tricks in a sort of clandestine way behind backs, at whom Charlotte would shake a finger now and then with an admonitory smiling look. Charley was reading or writing at the end of the room. The soft little chime of the children's voices, the suppressed laughter and whispering of the boys, the father's leisurely remark now and then, made up a soft murmur of sound which was like the very breath of quietude and peace. How did I dare, their favoured guest, indebted so deeply as I was to their kindness, to go in among them with that mysterious message and disturb their tranquillity once more?

When I went into the drawing-room, which was not till an hour later, Charlotte looked up at me smiling with some playful remark as to my flight from the evening reading. But as she caught my eye her countenance changed. She put down her book, and after a little consideration walked to that end window through which I had looked, and which was in a deep recess, making me a little sign to follow her. 'How dark the night is,' she said with a little pretence of looking out; and then in a hurried under-tone, 'Mr. Temple, you have heard something more?'

'Not anything more, but certainly the same thing repeated. I have seen the lady again.'

'And who is she? Tell me frankly, Mr. Temple. Just the same thing—that Colin is in trouble? no details? I cannot imagine who can take so much interest. But you asked her for her name?'

'I asked her, but she gave me no reply. She waved her hand and went on. I begged her to see you, and not to give me such a commission; but it was of no use. I don't know if I ought to

¹ The Paraphrases are a selection of hymns always printed along with the metrical version of the Psalms in use in Scotland, and more easy, being more modern in diction, to be learnt by heart.

trouble you with a vague warning that only seems intended to give pain.'

'Oh yes,' she cried, 'oh yes, it was right to tell me. If I only knew who it was! Perhaps you can describe her better, since you have seen her a second time. But Colin has friends—whom we don't know. Oh, Mr. Temple, it is making a great claim upon your kindness, but could not you have followed her and found out who she was?'

'I might have done that,' I said. 'To tell the truth, it was so instantaneous and I was—startled.'

She looked up at me quickly with a questioning air, and grew a little pale, gazing at me; but whether she comprehended the strange wild fancy which I could not even permit myself to realise I cannot tell; for Charley seeing us standing together, and being in a state of nervous anxiety also, here came and joined us, and we stood talking together in an under tone till Mr. Campbell called to know if anything was the matter. 'You are laying your heads together like a set of conspirators,' said the old gentleman with a half-laugh. His manner to me was always benign and gracious; but now that I knew something of the family troubles I could perceive a vein of suppressed irritation, a certain watchfulness which made him alarming to the other members of the household. Charlotte gave us both a warning look. 'I will tell him to-morrow—I will delay no longer—but not to-night,' she said. 'Mr. Temple was telling us about his ramble, father. He has just come in in time to avoid the rain.'

'Well,' said the old man, 'he cannot expect to be free from rain up here in the Highlands. It is wonderful the weather we have had.' And with this the conversation fell into an easy domestic channel. Miss Campbell this time could not put away the look of excitement and agitation in her eyes. But she escaped with the children to see them put to bed, and we sat and talked of politics and other mundane subjects. The boys were all going to leave Ellermore next day—Tom and Jack for the 'works,' Charley upon some other business. Mr. Campbell made me formal apologies for them. 'I had hoped Colin would have been at home by this time to do the honours of the Highlands: but we expect him daily,' he said. He kept his eye fixed upon me as if to give emphasis to his words and defy any doubt that might arise in my mind.

Next morning I was summoned by Charley before I came downstairs to 'come quickly and speak to my father.' I found him in the library, which opened from the dining-room. He was walking about

the room in great agitation. He began to address me almost before I was in sight. 'Who is this, sir, that you have been having meetings with about Colin? some insidious gossip or other that has taken ye in. I need not tell you, Mr. Temple, a lawyer and an Englishman, that an anonymous statement——' For once the old gentleman had forgotten himself, his respect for his guest, his fine manners. He was irritated, obstinate, wounded in pride and feeling. Charlotte touched him on the arm with a murmured appeal, and turned her eyes to me in anxious deprecation. But there was no thought further from my mind than that of taking offence.

'I fully feel it,' I said; 'nor was it my part to bring any disagreeable suggestion into this house—if it had not been that my own mind was so burdened with it and Miss Campbell so clear-sighted.'

He cast a look at her, half affectionate, half displeased, and then he said to me testily, 'But who was the woman? That is the question; that is what I want to know.'

My eyes met Charlotte's as I looked up. She had grown very pale, and was gazing at me eagerly, as if she had divined somehow the wild fancy which once more shot across my mind against all reason and without any volition of mine.

(To be continued.)



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CHARLES W. OWEN, L.R.C.P., Lon. M.R.C.S. Eng.
The Divisional Head Quarters Staff and Civil Surgeon, Cabul.

'THE TIMES,' August 13, 1877.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JANUARY 1883.

Thicker than Water.

BY JAMES PAYN, AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' 'HIGH SPIRITS,' &c.

CHAPTER X.

'I SUPPOSE IT MUST BE "YES."'

SOME apology seems owing that so very prominent a member of the Park Lane household as the Emperor Alexander has not as yet been introduced to the reader. But the fact is, his title, through the affability of his manners, had long fallen into desuetude, and of late years—that is, since the death of his late master—he had been confined to the ground-floor apartments, and was seldom seen. The dog, a magnificent St. Bernard, had been a great favourite with Mr. Beckett—almost the only creature besides himself, I think, which that tippling civil engineer had any regard for; and in his time he had wandered over the house at will. Nothing was further from his mind than mischief; one look at his thoughtful eyes and massive head would have convinced you he was incapable of it; but in the drawing-room, crowded as it was with costly nick-nacks, he did with his colossal tail a good deal of involuntary damage. The 'Brush system,' as Charley said, is an admirable one if you only have it under control; but this was not the case with that of Alexander. It worked incessantly, and with great power, but to no useful purpose. On the contrary, it was destructive. Like his great namesake of old, his path was marked with devastation, but, unlike the Imperial Madman, he meant no harm. How could the poor animal know what was going on behind him?

His heart, like his frame, was a noble one; there was but one blot in his character—fidelity to his former master. This, however, was an error of race; the dog is to be won by fear, but the cat never—a circumstance which, if there were no other urgent reason for it, would always place the cat above the dog in my opinion. So far, however, as his lights could guide him, Alexander was perfection. His mistress was rather set against him, as she averred, because of his behaviour towards her blue china, though I suspect that was not the real explanation of her coldness; but Mary Marvon adored him, and her affection was reciprocated. She liked nothing better than a walk in the Park with Alexander for her sole companion; he enjoyed it equally, and when once his first manifestations of delight, which resembled the gambols of some hairy elephant with his trunk at the wrong end of him, were over, in a no less sober fashion. Instead of being the ‘off and on companion of her walks,’ as Wordsworth’s dog was, he stuck to her like Una’s lion, and would not have deserted his charge even to fight a unicorn. As to other dogs, he ignored their very existence. He never made any excursions of curiosity into the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdoms, but trotted by her side with a majestic slouch, deaf to every call but that of duty. If another dog forced itself on his attention—a very rare occurrence except with bull-dogs—he never bit them, nor so much as opened his mouth; he literally fell upon them and crushed their breath out. Those who had any pride left in them accounted to their friends for their flattened condition by ascribing it to a steam roller.

On the morning of Mr. Rennie’s visit, Mary Marvon and her four-footed friend took their way across the Park to the Serpentine. It was their favourite walk; Mary enjoyed the brightness and beauty of the scene, liked to see the children sailing their toy boats, and feeding the ducks, and all the stir of innocent enjoyment. The Emperor Alexander took a gracious interest in the water-dogs, and had a secret curiosity, which his sense of dignity forbade him to gratify, to discover if they were web-footed. Mary’s pet standpoint—for she always lingered a minute there—was the bridge by Kensington Gardens, which has a view to northwards equal in beauty and superior in extent to that from the bridge in St. James’s Park; to the south there is a still finer prospect, if the eye can only avoid that equestrian image of the Duke of Wellington, which makes one wish that Fame were indeed a bubble, and could evanesce without enduring brass. She is gazing now on the shining water and the stately trees, but her

heart is far from them. She has only to say one little word, as she believes, and it will be further still—in another's keeping.

With young ladies of the present day—those, at least, who permit themselves to love at all, who are said to be in a minority—it is the fashion, as Douglas did with the heart of Bruce, to throw that organ before them and follow it into the fray. They flatter themselves that, having risked so tremendous a stake, they must needs evoke a declaration and win their lover. Such a practice is doubtless a spur to exertion, but it has its drawbacks and its dangers. In my opinion it is more maidenly to wait till they have answered 'Yes' to a very important question. Mary Marvon was of this opinion; her heart was still her own, but it roved, and took short swallow flights from home—how could she help it?—in the direction of Edgar Dornay.

She was thinking over what Mrs. Beckett had said to her the previous day; no doubt it would be to her advantage to marry the man she loved, but that was the very reason which gave her pause. It is well to look closely into any course which is recommended to us by inclination and our own interests. The question with her was, would her marriage with Edgar Dornay be to *his* advantage? She knew that his present life was a luxurious one; and, though she credited him with certain genuine qualities, the notion of his possessing which, in those who knew him better, would have evoked a smile, she doubted of his fitness for a life-long 'day of small things;' an existence mitigated by cheap and unfrequent pleasures, and flawed by economies and acts of self-denial. At times she even thought she had noticed in him aspirations after great wealth, or at all events an admiration of it. She was not so foolish as to imagine that three months after marriage he would be as much in love with her as he professed to be at present; but her beauty was not her sheet anchor, as it is with so many girls. She had some hope that by that time he would have learnt to love her for what she had in her of true worth.

For Mary Marvon, though portionless and almost friendless, was much too honest to hold herself worthless; in her heart of hearts she believed herself worthy of Edgar's love, and would have done so had he been as rich as Mrs. Beckett—not that she exaggerated her own merits, but because she was little more impressed by mere money than her four-footed companion.

'Wough, wough!' said Alexander, who was looking through the balustrade by the side of his mistress, and had recognised an acquaintance upon the south side of the lake. It was a hoarse

murmur rather than a growl ; but it was not a note of welcome. It seemed to say, 'There's a person I don't much care about coming towards us yonder ; but since you know him perhaps it's as well to mention the fact.'

Mary, who understood Alexander quite well, looked in the direction of his gaze, and at once perceived its object.

The 'person' was Edgar Dornay, handsome even in the morning, but whose bright intelligent face, or what she could see of it, for his head was bent, was fuller of thought than usual. At the sight of him her heart gave a quick jump, her cheeks became suffused with a sudden glow, and the light leaped into her eyes ; for the moment, love, taking advantage of her solitude—for, as it happened, there was no other passenger on the bridge—had asserted itself. The next moment she was herself again ; but, if she could have looked into the young man's mind, she would have despised herself for that momentary weakness. He was thinking of the momentous interview that was to take place that afternoon at Beckett House, and of the conversation he had held on the Saturday night with his uncle. That gentleman, as we know, had failed to turn him from his purpose, but his arguments had been by no means without their effect ; and he shrank from any recapitulation of them. He had not seen his relative since he returned from Brighton, and did not intend to see him (though there was an opportunity of doing so, since Uncle Ralph always lunched at his club) till he had seen the widow. His best chance, he felt, of carrying out his plan was to see him no more till it was completed, or till he had asked Mrs. Beckett, *in propria personâ*, to marry him, and been formally accepted. And, above all, until this was done it was his intention to keep clear of Mary Marvon.

Every word Ralph had spoken concerning her had had a barb in it ; and what his uncle had said was as nothing compared with the gnawings of his own thoughts, the sense of cowardice and falsehood and shame, and above all the consciousness of loss. For in his own way Edgar Dornay loved the girl—shrank from losing her, and was rendered desperate by the thought of another possessing her. When she was by his side she was all in all to him ; but apart from her, or, as he grossly expressed it to himself, when 'in his sober senses,' he loved other things better—such as luxury and pleasure and ease. He had never made Mary an offer, but he had meant to do it, and he felt that she knew he meant it ; he believed that he had won her heart, or rather stolen it, since

it now turned out it was gained under false pretences, and that after to-day she would regard him as a thief and a liar.

In comparison with this reflection all other drawbacks in connection with the widow faded into nothing; if her age had been doubled and her income halved, and his conduct to Mary Marvon could only have been blotted out, his condition would have been preferable to what it was at that moment. How could he ever hold up his head in her presence and meet her reproachful eyes? He foresaw that her first act on learning what he had done would be to leave Beckett House for a life of poverty and dependence, since from the woman who was her rival, and whose gold had outweighed her worth in his eyes, she would scorn to take a penny. Although a selfish man, Edgar Dornay was (as yet) by no means callous, and the thought of these things gave him great discomfort. After much pondering, he had come to the conclusion that the best thing he could do for himself after his interview with Mrs. Beckett was to leave town for a few days; when on his return to Park Lane he felt well assured he should find the coast clear. Having made his plans thus far, he drew a long breath like a man who 'sees his way' through at least the first part of a difficulty; and, raising his eyes from the ground for the first time, saw Mary Marvon standing on the bridge.

At the same moment their eyes met; if they had not done so Mr. Edgar Dornay would without doubt have turned his face homeward and gone back again; but though he felt himself to be a coward every inch of him, he was not such a coward as that. He mounted the slope that led to the bridge and met her with an outstretched hand.

'I had no idea that you were to be found abroad so early, Mr. Dornay,' said Mary. 'Report has maligned you.'

'Report generally does,' he answered gravely. 'It is unfortunate for poor human nature, whose motives need extenuation rather than to have things set down in malice.'

He was thinking of what she would say of him when she came to know all.

'You are philosophic,' she said, smiling. 'That is a bad sign; I am afraid you have not yet breakfasted, Mr. Dornay.'

It was very true; he had sat down to the morning meal at Brighton, but, notwithstanding the boasted effects of the sea breeze, had left it almost untasted. 'You are taking your walk earlier than usual, yourself, are you not, Mary?'

He would have said Miss Marvon had he dared, but his

familiarity of manner had gone beyond that ; she still gave him his proper title, but when they were alone together he had of late addressed her by her Christian name.

‘Yes,’ she answered, ‘Mrs. Beckett is engaged with Mr. Rennie ; he has come to transact some pressing and important matter, she told me, which would deprive me of her companionship.’

‘What did she mean ?’ inquired Edgar, turning pale. To his disordered mind there seemed a dreadful significance in these simple words.

‘Well, she meant that I must be content with my four-footed friend here this morning—down, Alec ! down, my dear !’ for the affectionate creature, catching this allusion to himself or at least the glance that accompanied it, wished to place by way of epaulettes a gigantic paw on each of her dainty shoulders—‘I did not of course calculate upon the pleasure of meeting you, Mr. Dornay.’

‘No,’ he answered gently, ‘no.’ His heart was melting within him like wax ; the sight of her beauty, the sound of her voice, were overcoming him. Absence is said to ‘make the heart grow fonder,’ but presence, especially if the object of our affections is attractive, has a still more powerful influence in that way. This was the very thing that he had been afraid of—to meet her face to face—and he had reason to fear it.

‘And how was Mr. Rennie looking ?’ He did not dare to speak of Mrs. Beckett. ‘As like the Sphinx as usual, I suppose ; full of his secrets ?’

‘He is never secretive with me ; not of course that he ever tells me anything, but he is most frank and kind. I venture to think that I am rather a favourite of his.’

‘I do not wonder at that.’

She gave him, with infinite grace, an almost imperceptible curtsy. ‘Thank you, sir ; but I am afraid it is from no personal merit that Mr. Rennie is so civil to me. I fancy it is a pleasant change to him to talk with one who never speaks of money, because she has none. Mrs. Beckett tells me that he has no such thing as a poor client. They are now probably disposing of tens of thousands—millions for all I know—those two.’

Edgar sighed.

‘You are wishing that you had millions yourself, Mr. Dornay ?’

‘No ; quite the contrary. I mean,’ he added hastily, ‘that my heart was not just then fixed on—the subject you suggest.’

‘Then it sometimes is, I infer.’

‘Sometimes ; that is, I have sometimes thought—as most of us have—how pleasant it would be to be rich.’

They had left the bridge by this time, and were slowly crossing the Park in the direction of the Reformers’ Tree. There was no one near them except Alexander, who followed closely behind. His brow was clouded, his head depressed ; his massive jaws seemed to find attraction in the calves of Mr. Edgar Dornay’s legs, as they alternately presented themselves to his notice.

‘I have never speculated upon that subject myself,’ said Mary gravely ; ‘perhaps from the impossibility, in my case, of such a dream being realised. But I can easily understand your doing so. I do not think you are fitted to be a poor man.’

‘You mean a poor bachelor. In my present position I own that wealth has its allurements. Pleasure can be purchased, but happiness cannot ; and, after all, what man desires is happiness ; the lasting good.’

‘But one must be sure of its lasting,’ she answered gravely ; ‘that is the difficulty.’

‘No doubt. The best road to it, however, it is agreed upon all hands, is to secure a loving wife.’

‘That is not your uncle’s view,’ said Mary lightly. She knew whither his talk was tending, and did not wish to encourage it. Was it some presentiment that warned her to keep him at arms’ length that morning ?

‘There are doubtless some who are happiest as single men,’ admitted Edgar. ‘My uncle Ralph perhaps for one ; but do not suppose he does not advocate matrimony for others ; for myself for instance. Your ears should have burnt the other night, since he spent hours of it in singing your praises.’

‘A somewhat new departure for him, was it not ?’ she inquired drily, but without surprise ; for Mr. Ralph Dornay, as we know, had himself prepared her for it.

‘Yes ; it is never too late to mend, however, and I will do him the justice to say that his recantation has been a very full one.’

Here some one met them on the path ; and, in drawing nearer to the girl, his arm touched hers. When he had shaken hands with her twenty minutes ago, his mind had been divided between her and another ; the clasp of her hand had thrilled him a little, but that had been all. But now, since he had been some time in her company, and his mind had been dwelling on her and no other, that touch set his pulses ‘throbbing with the fulness of the spring.’ In an instant, as a sudden wind from the gates of the

sun clears the heavens of cloud, all sordid thoughts were swept away; the widow and her money were forgotten.

‘As for Uncle Ralph, Mary,’ he continued, in a low and fervid tone, ‘he was never an obstacle to my love for you; nothing could be that; but he is my nearest relative, and of course it pleases me to feel that such opposition as was in his power to give has been withdrawn. Instead of being your enemy he is now your ally.’

‘So he was so good as to tell me on Saturday,’ said Mary coldly. The young man saw that he had lost ground.

‘Of course, Mary,’ he put in quickly, ‘it matters even less to you than it does to me whether Uncle Ralph approves of our being engaged or not. I only mentioned it to show that there were now no hindrances to it, however slight. You will not say “no,” darling, merely because there is no reason for it, out of sheer caprice?’

‘Certainly not,’ she said. ‘My doubts—for I have doubts—arise from no fanciful cause, but from what I know of your own nature.’

‘My nature! Would to heaven, Mary, you could this moment look into my inmost heart; you would see yourself and no other mirrored there.’

‘I was not thinking of any other, Edgar,’ she said with a slight blush; ‘to do you justice, I do not believe you capable of double dealing.’

His eyes left hers and sought the ground; the blush on her face was reflected on his own, and she attributed it to the same cause; she took it for modesty because she had praised him—and not for shame. ‘Moreover,’ she continued, ‘I quite believe that at this moment you think you could be happy with me without those luxuries—or with a great diminution of them—on which your happiness has hitherto so largely depended.’

‘My darling,’ he answered vehemently, ‘what is luxury, what is wealth, compared with the possession of such a treasure as you? That is what I pine for; all else is as nothing to me. Oh, Mary, if you would only believe me!’

‘I wish to believe you, Edgar,’ she answered hesitatingly; ‘but I dare not.’

His very fervour increased her reluctance, even while it filled her with delight; it seemed to her that it was wrong to take advantage of such headlong and unreasoning passion.

‘Then, if you wish it, that is all I wish,’ he put in hastily. ‘My darling! my darling!’

He longed to clasp her in his arms ; but that was impossible, as the trees in Hyde Park offer by no means that 'boundless contiguity of shade' so essential for such a proceeding ; moreover (though he would have risked *that*) Alexander would have probably resented any such demonstration. As for Mary, her limbs trembled beneath her, and thereby typified her mental condition. Shaken by the vehemence of his protestations and the fascination of his presence, her resolution was fast giving way.

'I must go in now, Edgar,' she murmured.

'But not as you came out, Mary,' he answered quickly ; 'you are no longer a free woman, remember ; you are mine.'

'Not yet,' she said, but this time with a faint smile.

It was her last protest.

'That is only because the agreement is not ratified,' he murmured tenderly.

'I will come'—then he suddenly remembered that he could not come ; that he no more dared enter into Beckett House on the errand in question than into the abode of the queen lioness in the Zoological Gardens—'that is, I will write to-day,' he stammered ; 'then you will send me your answer in black and white ; and it will be "Yes," my darling. I *know* it will be "Yes."'

'I suppose it must be "Yes,"' said Mary softly.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SUBSTITUTE.

HAVING once, though it is true only tacitly, consented to engage herself to Edgar Dornay, Mary Marvon ventured to be very happy. It is not, as we have been told, for companions and dependants to indulge themselves in the luxury of woe, how much more, then, in that of happiness ! and though Mary herself, thanks to the fortunate circumstances of her position as much as to her native pride, felt little of this social depression, she seldom gave way to vivacity. On this occasion, however, the girl returned home in high spirits ; and it was for this reason, perhaps, that she did not notice the unusual gaiety of her hostess. Mrs. Beckett was generally what, if she were a man, would have been called 'good company,' but she had never before been so bright and merry. She was happy in the consciousness that she had, with Mr. Rennie's aid, conferred great

advantage upon the man she loved; and happy also on her own account. But she did not, as on the last occasion when she and Mary were alone together, make marriage the topic of conversation. It would be necessary sooner or later, of course, to allude to her engagement, but at present she shrank from it. Notwithstanding her protestations of independence and carelessness of the opinion of the world, she felt some embarrassment in communicating her news even to Mary Marvon.

Mary herself felt something of the same kind. She indeed had nothing to be ashamed of in those future prospects of which not sooner or later, but very soon, it behoved her to speak to her hostess; for had not Mrs. Beckett with her own lips advised her to accept the first eligible offer? But she had an idea that her news would very much astonish the widow, and felt some coyness in broaching the subject *à propos des bottes*.

The only approach that Mrs. Beckett made to it, so far from encouraging her to pursue it, had quite a contrary effect. Her hostess informed the butler at luncheon that she would not require her carriage that afternoon; and also that she would be at home to nobody except Mr. Dornay.

‘Mr. Ralph or Mr. Edgar, my lady?’ he inquired. It was a most unfortunate question, for the widow’s remark was intended to be of great significance. It was, in fact, her method of preparing the way for informing Mary of what had happened.

‘I said Mr. Dornay,’ she answered with severity. ‘If I had meant Mr. Ralph I should have said Mr. Ralph.’

It was rather hard on the butler, who, less acquainted with precedence than with perquisites, naturally imagined that Mr. Ralph, being the elder, was of right Mr. Dornay. The sharpness of the widow’s tone did not escape Mary’s attention, but the remark itself filled her with amazement. How was it, if Edgar had an appointment with the widow, that he had not informed her (Mary) of it while they were in the Park together? and why had he spoken of writing to her when he was thus about to have so early an opportunity of seeing her? On the other hand—not, of course, anticipating their recent interview and its happy result—perhaps he had sought a personal interview with Mrs. Beckett, to enlist her assistance in pressing his suit.

Never were two women placed in a more false position to one another than were Mary Marvon and her hostess, and yet through no fault of their own.

After luncheon, Mrs. Beckett retired to her boudoir, and Mary

to her own room ; each glad enough to be alone, but without the least mistrust or ill-feeling as respected the other.

By three o'clock the widow's impatience had become considerable. She was very far from wishing that any particular respect should be paid to her on the ground of age, but she could not but remember that when her last husband was courting her he was always rather before his time than after, and that even against Sir Robert there had been nothing to complain of as regarded punctuality. At a quarter past three o'clock she felt that she had been foolish in making her Edgar so completely independent of her, and experienced some satisfaction in reflecting that the document which Mr. Rennie had sent to her according to promise was only a copy of her instructions. She appreciated, not for the first time, the wisdom of the legal doctrine that judgment should precede execution.

At half-past three, her indignation against her Edgar was so considerable that she not only repented of all her good intentions towards the young man, but repented—not for the money's sake, but that of her own self-respect—of having sent him that little cheque for 500*l*. Then her maid knocked at her door, and her heart leapt up with a joyful bound, and she felt she could forgive him anything.

'If you please, my lady, Mr. Dornay is here.'

'Why is he not shown up at once? Did I not give orders to Harris to that effect?'

'Why, yes, my lady; but he says as this is the wrong Mr. Dornay.'

'The wrong Mr. Dornay? What do you mean? Who is it?'

'Well, please my lady, it's Mr. Ralph.'

This did not please my lady at all; indeed it was very far from pleasing her; but she could not say so. At first, indeed, she was even more alarmed than disgusted. She feared that some accident had happened to Edgar. Good heavens, suppose he had been thrown from his horse! And she had just been accusing him of ingratitude, and of such infidelity as man, and man alone, was capable.

'Show Mr. Ralph Dornay up.'

He came, the very pink of perfection as to apparel; with his head erect and a quick elastic step; a very presentable gentleman of four-and-forty at oldest; but with a certain air of tender gravity which she had never before known him to wear.

He took the hand she extended towards him, and pressed it respectfully. 'Nothing has happened to your nephew, I trust?' she inquired with irrepressible anxiety.

‘Nothing—that is to say physically; he is well enough in health.’ She knew at once that he had changed his mind about her, as certainly as though she had heard it from his own lips. A mist seemed to form itself before her eyes, but not from tears; the weakness to which she was giving way was not of that sort at all; she was livid with fury, the *spretæ injuria formæ*—second only to a wrong done to her offspring in its power of arousing woman’s hate—was raging within her. But there was no heat. Her face was pale and stiff as marble, and it was in a very quiet tone that she observed :

‘You know, I suppose, that I was expecting him.’

Uncle Ralph closed his eyes and uplifted his hands; no words could have more clearly expressed his shame and abhorrence of what had occurred; he looked like some virtuous father in a melodrama, desolated by the misconduct of an unworthy son.

‘My dear Mrs. Beckett,’ he answered impressively, ‘I know *all*; that is to say,’ he added hastily, remembering that there were some incidents in the matter in hand (such as Mrs. Beckett’s letter to his nephew) which he had better *not* know, ‘all that a man who feels he has behaved recklessly and discredibly dares to tell another. I am come here not to excuse Edgar, nor even to palliate his conduct, but, so far as it admits of explanation, to explain it.’

The widow sat like a statue, ‘staring right on’ at the wall behind him with straining eyes; she could not trust herself, such was the humiliation and shame—but above all the anger—that consumed her, to make so much as a sign. If life should stir within her ever so little, it seemed to her that the pent-up torrent of her wrath must needs burst forth, and that she must ‘say things’ of which she would repent her whole life long. This impassiveness was extremely embarrassing to Uncle Ralph, who was much in want of a lead; he felt like a man who starts upon an aerial voyage without a straw to tell him which way the wind is blowing, and is very much afraid of his balloon going to sea.

‘The fact is, my dear Mrs. Beckett, my nephew Edgar is impressionable—too impressionable—tender-hearted, very susceptible of kindness, but a creature of impulse. Of course he did not acquaint me with the actual details of the transaction in question; but I understand that you exhibited the generosity that is habitual with you, though it is such as does not enter into the dreams of others. There lay his error; he attached too special and particular significance to an act which was with you one of everyday practice;

in point of fact,' concluded Uncle Ralph, beginning to lose confidence in his balancing pole upon this very high rope, 'you sent him some money.'

'I did!' The words shot out from the poor lady's tight-shut lips like a pellet from a popgun. 'The sum,' she added with more self-command of tone, 'was a very small one.'

'No doubt; that is, it seemed so to you, dear Mrs. Beckett; but we have not all your princely revenues. Moreover, it is the characteristic of a nature such as Edgar's to exaggerate a kindness. His heart was overflowing with gratitude. On the impulse of the moment he wrote to you a letter which he now regrets; since in it (as I am given to understand) he offered you, though it is true only by implication, what was not his to give.'

The widow smiled faintly; she felt sick at heart. This news that Edgar loved another was worse—infinately worse—than all; but still she smiled.

'You did not take it in that sense?' continued the other eagerly. 'I am indeed delighted to hear it; that was the very view of the matter I took myself. "My dear Edgar," I said, "if Mrs. Beckett has taken your communication in earnest"'—the widow's brow darkened. Uncle Ralph altered his course with the speed of a skater whonears a hole—and a very deep one—"or rather I should say if Mrs. Beckett fails to see that your gratitude has overwhelmed your judgment, your letter will give her annoyance. She will very justly consider it a piece of impertinence. That you are a great favourite of hers is true (which emboldens me to hope that she will forgive you); but she has never given you the slightest encouragement—even if you were free to do it, which you are not—to make any such proposal to her. It is one which a man, much more suitable for her than yourself, would, under her exceptional circumstances, hesitate to make, however he might admire and adore her."

Here Uncle Ralph's voice faltered; it was clear that he was suffering from personal emotion.

"Such a proceeding on his part would be open to so much misconstruction, that he would prefer to carry his secret with him to the grave. But you, you have rushed in where—that is to say where a more eligible, though not perhaps a more worthy, suitor would have hesitated to tread. My only hope—which, however, is a firm one—is that this dear and excellent lady will have appreciated your motives, and therefore understood your mistake." I told him all that,' concluded Uncle Ralph, wiping his forehead instead of his eyes.

He was quite conscious of the anticlimax involved in the last sentence, but he really could not maintain this noble style any longer; it was like keeping five balls going in the air at once—all spiked.

‘I quite understood the matter,’ returned the widow, beginning to recover her self-possession and feeling not a little grateful to her companion for pointing out to her any road which avoided the valley of humiliation; ‘but I thought your nephew would have had the grace to make an apology with his own lips.’

‘Ah, madam, pray have pity upon him!’ returned Uncle Ralph pathetically. ‘He was ashamed to do so; perhaps he feared, in the presence of so much graciousness and beauty’ (Mrs. Beckett blushed not unbecomingly, and certainly not because she was offended), ‘that he should again waver in his allegiance where it was due by rights—for indeed it had been offered and was accepted.’ A hope that his previous words had fanned anew in the widow’s breast, here faded away and became cold embers. Uncle Ralph read it in her face, but he could not afford to spare her. It was necessary to his own interests that that hope should die; and he accordingly set his heel upon it. ‘Yes, madam, my nephew is engaged to another lady. So far, as I told him, he is the more excusable, since, being so situated, his conduct towards yourself shows that he had taken leave of his senses.’

Without taking notice of this plea of insanity Mrs. Beckett inquired in quiet tones, ‘Has your nephew been long engaged to be married?’

The word ‘long’ in respect of time is almost as vague and variable as the carpenter’s definition of magnitude—‘about the size of a piece of chalk.’ Uncle Ralph knew very well—for Edgar had made a clean breast to him of everything at luncheon, and besought his assistance—that his engagement to Mary was about three hours old, but it would have been injudicious to say so. ‘Not a very long time,’ he replied evasively; ‘but the attachment is an old one, and to me I must say,’ he added with a gentle sigh, ‘a most inexplicable one.’

‘Why?’

The curtness of this monosyllabic inquiry seemed to disconcert Mr. Ralph Dornay exceedingly.

‘Well; there are certain reasons, madam, if you compel me to mention them. Under the same roof with the object of my nephew’s affections, who has little beyond personal beauty, and (I admit) a sweet disposition, to recommend her, there dwells another lady

equally attractive in those respects, and in my humble opinion a thousand times more worthy of a man's devotion.'

'Do I know this young woman, Mr. Dornay?'

'You do, madam.'

She had anticipated no other reply; but its effect was extraordinary. Her eyes literally flashed fire; she did not speak, but her lips moved rapidly; her foot tapped vehemently upon the floor as if in warning to something within her—her temper—to keep itself within bounds.

'I have heard of a fit of jealousy,' thought Uncle Ralph to himself, 'and begad she is going to have one. This is the worst bit of the road, and I wish I was well over it.'

'So—so, Mr. Dornay,' continued the widow in a voice between a hiss and a scream, 'your nephew has been paying court to Miss Marvon—my companion—has he, beneath my very roof? I hope at least that his intentions were honourable.'

'Come, that's well,' thought Uncle Ralph; 'that *must* have relieved her.' But it was with a deprecating air and in very gentle tones that he replied, 'Oh, yes; as far as that goes, certainly. Indeed, I have a letter from him to the young lady herself which, as I have reason to believe, sets forth—'

'Give it me!' and Mrs. Beckett held forth her hand with an imperious gesture.

Here was a crisis indeed. If he committed what he knew to be Edgar's private offer of marriage to Mary Marvon into the widow's hands, good-bye for ever to his nephew's friendship; a long farewell to all the advantages flowing from 'the head of the family' and ancestral ties; but if he refused, it was equally plain that he would lose the widow.

'There is nothing, my dear Mrs. Beckett, *nothing*—that I could find in my heart to refuse you; I would that you could read that heart.'

'I have, I do,' she said significantly. He took her still extended hand and kissed it. 'Is it possible,' he whispered softly but boldly, 'that I may hope one day to call this mine?'

She did not say 'Yes'—though she had certainly well understood him—and she did not say 'No.' Many emotions were at work within her—though none of them was love—which urged her to accept him. The most powerful of them was pique—which has driven both man and woman into wedlock with more precipitancy than ever love did; there was revenge which she could wreak by this means both upon the unfaithful Edgar and on Mary; and

there was pride, for thus she saw her way to save herself from humiliation in the eyes of Mr. Rennie. But amidst it all her thoughts were much more occupied with her old love than with her new.

‘Give me the letter!’ she repeated—‘your nephew’s letter.’

Uncle Ralph put a note into her hand; it was addressed to herself in Edgar’s handwriting.

‘What is this?’ she inquired.

‘Carried away by emotion and overwhelmed by gratitude to you for holding out a hope to me which I myself had scarcely ventured to entertain, I had forgotten this little matter,’ he said. ‘I believe it contains nothing but your cheque.’

She tore it across and across with vehemence, and snowed the fragments on the floor.

‘I want his letter to Mary Marvon.’

It was certainly a breach of confidence and something worse, but Mr. Ralph Dornay had gone too far to retreat; he gave her Mary Marvon’s letter. She clutched it with eager haste.

‘I know you will respect the contents,’ he said; not that he thought she would, but by way of protest against their violation, and because he had been brought up as a gentleman.

‘Truly, they merit respect,’ was the scornful rejoinder. ‘You may depend, Mr. Dornay, upon this letter reaching its destination; and now, if you please, I must be alone.’

‘And when, my dear Mrs. Beckett’—he did not even yet dare address her by her Christian name—‘may I hope to see you again? After having made me the happiest of men, do not doom me to banishment, every moment of which will be torture.’

‘To-morrow.’

‘At what hour shall I find you alone?’

‘At any hour,’ she answered (with an exultant look which the other neatly translated ‘Miss Sharp-tongue will get her *congé* then at once’); ‘you may come to lunch if you like.’

‘At two o’clock then, to-morrow; good-bye.’ He took her hand, and, once more raising it to his lips, whispered so that she could hear it or not, as she pleased, ‘Dear, dearest Kitty.’

CHAPTER XII.

TWO WOMEN.

THERE are bad men as there are bad women—and a great many more of the former than of the latter—but good does not become bad in the male with such rapidity as in the female. *Nemo repente, &c.*, is a remark that does not apply to the softer sex. They are quicker about everything; and, for one thing, to take offence. Wound a woman, even by accident, in her susceptibilities, her admiration for her husband, her love for her children, her own good looks, or her age, and you will ‘see sparks.’ Should she be supplanted in the affections of her lover it will arouse a sleeping devil such as you would never believe could have found harbour in so fair a form. Whether you resist him or not, he will not ‘flee from you,’ and you may be considered exceptionally fortunate if he does not fly *at* you.

If Mrs. Beckett has not given the reader the impression of being on the whole a good sort of woman, it is the fault of him who has described her; but just at present she is hardly recognisable as a woman at all. Edgar Dornay’s letter to Mary Marvon lies before her unopened; I don’t say she would have read it if she could, but I think it fortunate that he did not put it into an adhesive envelope, but took the precaution to seal it. In a metaphorical sense she had already read it, for her eyes pierced through and through it; she would have given a thousand pounds to have been able to possess herself of its contents without detection; but the Dornay crest was a peculiar one, and though she might be said to have duplicated her arrangements with certain members of the family, she had no duplicate of *that*.

Another letter lay beside it in the same handwriting; the one she had herself received but yesterday from her faithless swain—he had lied to her, humiliated her, played her false, and she had not one spark of affection left for him. But she did not at that moment hate him as she hated that ‘impudent, treacherous, designing minx’—who, as a matter of fact, had not injured her in thought, or word, or deed—Mary Marvon.

The second letter—the widow’s own—was loathsome to her, but she was glad that she had not torn it up in her first paroxysm of fury (which she had been tempted to do) as she had torn the cheque; for it still had its uses. Presently, though it was like putting a serpent there, she placed it in her bosom, and with the

other (Mary's letter) in her hand she descended into the drawing-room and rang the bell.

'Is Miss Marvon within doors?'

'I believe so, my lady.'

'Tell her—that is, tell Simmons to tell her—that I wish to see her in her own room.'

After a few minutes, to admit of her being prepared for her and alone, the widow went upstairs as Eleanor visited Rosamond; the bowl in one hand, the dagger in the other. But her errand was less merciful—it was her intention to use both.

Mary, inclined for solitude, and chewing the cud of sweet reflection, had been more annoyed than surprised by the maid's message; it had interrupted some bright day dreams, but it was not unusual for Mrs. Beckett to seek half an hour's intimate talk with her young companion, which she playfully termed 'a kegmeg.' Poor Mary, who had been waiting for the postman with her ears pricked, little imagined what sort of a kegmeg it was destined to be.

Directly she caught sight of Mrs. Beckett's face, indeed, she knew that something was wrong, and very wrong; not a suspicion, however, crossed her mind of the real state of the case. She rose quickly with a look of affectionate sympathy. 'My dear Mrs. Beckett, what has happened?'

'I have brought you a letter, Miss Marvon;' here she threw it on the table. 'It is for you, is it not?' for Mary was gazing at it with wild surprise. 'You know the handwriting, I suppose, and I fancy you must have been expecting it.'

'Yes, Mrs. Beckett, I did expect it.'

Mary had drawn herself up to her full height, and was looking the widow straight in the face; her manner was respectful, but by no means subservient. Her voice was resolute and without a tremor. It seemed to say, 'You are my social superior, but you have no right to interfere with my private affairs.'

'Oh, you did, did you? You have the impudence to tell me that.'

'Madam!'

'Yes; I repeat it, *the impudence*. How dare you look me in the face like that, conscious as you must be of such underhand and shameful ways? Yes, you may well blush; I am glad to see you *can* blush.'

'You must have gone mad, Mrs. Beckett,' interrupted Mary; not because she thought so, but because, though a sweet-tempered and generous girl, she was not a patient Griselda.

‘That is true,’ was the widow’s unexpected reply. ‘I must have gone stark staring mad to have so long believed in the innocence of such a treacherous, artful creature; to have wasted kindness and consideration on such an ingrate. I ought to have remembered the proverb about setting beggars on horseback.’

‘And when, madam, may I ask, have I ever begged of you?’

It was a pertinent question; for twenty times had the widow protested to her young companion that she was a treasure that no money could buy, and that the obligation in the matter of her engagement at Beckett House lay on the side of the employer, and not of the employed. Mary’s salary, though a liberal one, was not excessive, and she herself had declined, notwithstanding Mrs. Beckett’s repeated solicitations, to have it raised. It could certainly not be said with any truth that she had begged of her. There was a faint mitigation in Mrs. Beckett’s tone. It was still vinegar, but vinegar without cayenne pepper, as she replied, ‘At all events, Miss Marvon, your condition here was that of an inferior, and it ill became you indeed to set your cap, as you have done, at a gentleman like Mr. Dornay, my guest and equal.’

‘Measured by the purse, madam,’ returned Mary coldly, ‘no doubt you are in a very superior position; still, there are other standards. I will admit—though I see it now for the first time—that my proper course was to have told you of Mr. Dornay’s attentions to me; but I will not admit, no, not for a moment, that there was anything to be reprobated in my encouraging them, even if I did encourage them, which, as he will tell you, I never did.’

‘He will tell me!’ echoed the other disdainfully. ‘Do you think I shall stoop to ask him? Do you think I don’t know how your whole scheme was carried on as though I had seen it played? Your pretence of modesty, your mock humility, your *innocence*, while all the time your heart—no, not your heart, your cunning, artful mind—was fixed on making him your husband; him in whose veins runs the best blood in England, and you a base-born nobody—nobody’s child.’

‘That is false!’ interrupted the girl, with a deep flush. ‘Everything you say is false. Who told you I was—what you said just now?’

‘Never mind who told me. I know it. Ask your friend Mrs. Sotheran. You to marry Edgar Dornay; you! I wish him joy of you. Read his letter, his offer of disinterested love; and when you have read it, read *that*.’ She took the note that lay in her

bosom and threw it on the table beside the other. 'You will see there that you were not the first to whom he has offered himself; that you were but a second thought, such as strikes a man on the spur of the moment—a *pis aller*, a makeshift, that he takes up with out of pique, when he has failed to secure for himself wealth and station.'

She was gone in a moment, leaving the letters behind her, and Mary gazing at them with bewildered looks.

What had happened? What did it all mean? All that she knew for certain was that a terrible change had befallen her, and that she was not the same woman who but a few minutes ago had been indulging in dreams of happiness, lapping herself in soft Lydian airs, or rather to that 'unheard music' which the poet truly tells us is sweeter far than any evoked from chord.

Mrs. Beckett had said many things which, whether true or false, demanded her immediate attention; it behoved her to look them in the face, and, for the future, life itself in the face. She knew even now that she would have to fight her way in the world alone, and well indeed for her if that should prove the worst of it. Poor she knew she was, but base-born! If *that* was true—well, what mattered? What need is there to blush for offences for which we ourselves are in no way to blame? Yet the colour was high in poor Mary's cheeks.

First to be considered, however—if, indeed, she was capable of consideration or reflection—were the letters. Mrs. Beckett had recommended her to read them in a certain order. It was but natural that she should take the contrary course. She read the widow's letter first.

'My dear Mrs. Beckett,—Your kind letter has affected me beyond measure. I feel I am not worthy of your love, but I hope to become worthy of it. I shall be with you at three o'clock on Monday, when I shall trust to find you alone.

'Ever yours affectionately,

'EDGAR DORNAY.'

The date was Saturday—only Saturday! He was to have been with Mrs. Beckett to-day almost at that very hour. Doubtless he would have been with her had she not rejected him by letter in the meantime; and having received that letter and found his chances of 'securing wealth and station' (those were the woman's very words) were over, he had offered his disdained hand that very morning to herself. Poor Mary! If her rival's advice had been

followed, her cup would without doubt have been made more bitter for her; to have opened her lover's letter first, and afterwards to have learnt his infidelity, would have been hard indeed. But she was forewarned and forearmed. His burning words of passion reached her heart but could not sear it; it had to some extent been rendered callous; his protestations of eternal love awoke no answering chord, and even some contempt. She had misplaced her love; but, having discovered her mistake, she was not one of those who waste it to the very dregs upon an unworthy object. She was not angry with him, as Mrs. Beckett had been; nay, even while she despised him, she pitied him. 'What was luxury, what was wealth,' he had said to her only a few hours ago, 'compared with such a treasure as herself?' And only a few hours before he had told her so, he had proposed to the richest widow in England! She did not know, of course, what had actually occurred; that the widow had sent him money and proposed to *him*; yet she pretty accurately guessed how matters lay and the motives that had actuated him. She felt that Edgar Dornay had preferred her to her rival all along; that his love for her had even to a certain extent been genuine; nay, she believed (reading his conduct of the morning by the light now thrown upon it) that he had experienced a certain sense of relief in having been rejected by the widow, and left free to follow what had been his inclination throughout. But Mary Marvon was not the sort of woman who is willing to accept a man's inclination in exchange for her love. Not for one single instant did she entertain the thought of his now becoming her husband. It was not the apprehension of any weakness on her own part—the idea that with reflection should intrude the least shadow of a doubt—which caused her to sit down and pen him these few lines at once:

'Dear Sir,—Mrs. Beckett has just handed me your letter, as well as your note of Saturday addressed to herself. I have no more to say to you, save that I wish you well.

'Yours sincerely,

'MARY MARVON.'

She merely wished to get that matter over and done with; as to getting it 'off her mind,' that, alas! was quite another thing. It was likely to remain as long as memory held its seat there. It seemed to her as though her love had not so much been misplaced as mislaid; that the faculty of entertaining the passion was irrevocably lost. If she had not had that faculty she would

have missed nothing; it is not the man who is born blind who suffers, but the man who has had the use of his sight and becomes blind.

There are certain cases of misfortune in which our very deficiencies are of advantage to us; not in matters material—every drawback is there an additional source of unhappiness—but in those of sentiment and spiritual life. When, for instance, one is poor, and there is an absolute necessity for exertion, the bruised heart does not feel its pain as it does when one is prosperous; one must needs be up and doing, either for one's own sake or for that of others, and work not only prevents us from brooding over our calamities but itself is balm. To stay another hour under Mrs. Beckett's roof seemed intolerable to Mary; there was an immediate necessity for her leaving it; but whither, in her forlorn and friendless condition, should she go?

To Letcombe Dottrel she could hardly go without an invitation, or at least an express permission from Mrs. Sotheran. There had been always a disinclination on the part of that lady to see her at her own home; she had been so kind and friendly to her in all other respects that this had hitherto seemed inexplicable to Mary. But now, after those cruel words of Mrs. Beckett, she felt that there might be some reason for it. Base-born! If so, the Past, like the Future, was full of humiliation and bitterness; it had been a mistaken kindness to conceal such a misfortune from her; but now, at all events, it behoved her to know the worst. Only there were things still more pressing. First and foremost, her letter to Edgar must be despatched; while it remained unsent, it seemed to her that she was bound by invisible but shameful chains; and then she must cast about in her mind for some temporary home in town till Mrs. Sotheran could be communicated with. She was about to ring the bell when Simmons entered.

My lady's lady's-maid, as she delighted to call herself, was of mature years and of a rueful countenance; her inferiors addressed her as Mrs. Simmons, but it was but a title of courtesy, she still withered upon the virgin thorn. She was a mere anatomy of a woman, reminding you, in her extreme scragginess, of the poet's ungallant observation, 'Madam, if I know your sex by the fashion of your bones.' But her frame was always elegantly appparelled, and within it there was a kindly heart. She had never felt the antipathy of her class towards her mistress's 'companion;' and, now she was in trouble, she sympathised with her. What had actually happened of course she did not know; she would have

given her ears to know, though they were an exceptionally large pair; but she well understood that Miss Marvon had had notice to quit, or, as Mr. Harris below stairs had more concisely expressed it, 'had got the sack.'

'If you please, Miss Marvon, my lady bade me give you this note.'

It ran as follows:

'Mrs. Beckett thinks it possible that, after what has taken place, Miss Marvon may think it expedient to remove at once from Beckett House. This, in Mrs. Beckett's opinion, is not necessary, as the house is large enough to afford Miss Marvon accommodation and privacy without annoyance to any one. The inclosed cheque due to Miss Marvon for her services, is simply sent for her personal convenience, and by no means as a hint that her presence is no longer desirable. During the remainder of Miss Marvon's stay at Beckett House her meals will be served—since that arrangement will probably be more agreeable to her—in her own apartment.'

'Please to thank Mrs. Beckett, Simmons,' said Mary softly, 'and say I will take advantage of her consideration; and be so good as to have this letter sent by the first post.'

Even as it was, she was touched by her hostess's note; and if she had known all—that is, how severely the widow's *amour-propre* had been wounded—she would have regarded her late conduct with still greater charity. The fact was, as was remarked in the servants' hall, where opinion is in the main correct, 'My lady was not a bad sort.' Though, like most of her sex, she could be very 'small' upon occasions (or even when there was no occasion), her nature was not a petty one, and, albeit easily moved to passion, she was quick to repent of it. Nay, even when still angry, and very angry—as in the present instance—she had a certain generosity of spirit towards the object of her dislike. She felt it would be a mean and cowardly action for one in her position to thrust forth from her doors, in doubt as to where she should lay her head, a poor and friendless girl, even though she had been her successful rival. She was her guest, too; and enough of simplicity of character remained to the widow to make her feel the duties of hospitality; perhaps she even confessed to herself that she was old enough to be Mary's mother, and that it was her duty to protect her. That remark about the house being large enough for two, might even have been taken for conciliation, had the girl been inclined that way. Then, as to material matters,

Mrs. Beckett had been generous ; she had added a quarter's salary, in lieu of notice, to the money due to her late companion. This, however, through her perturbation of mind, had for the moment escaped Mary's attention.

Though the necessity for her departure seemed no longer so pressing, she was very anxious to depart, and unwilling to wait till letters could be exchanged between herself and Mrs. Sotheran. The only friend except Charley, who under the circumstances was out of the question, upon whose advice she could rely in London, was Mr. Rennie. She had no claim upon him, indeed, whatever ; but his manner to her had been always so cordial—with a touch of the guardian too, which encouraged her even more than its cordiality—that she resolved to ask his aid. It was a very small thing she required of him—namely, a recommendation to some respectable lodging—but it was essential she should have it. She did not, of course, enter into the reasons which caused her to desire so immediate a change of quarters ; and she knew, even if Mr. Rennie should come to her, that he was far too reticent and judicious a man to compel her to give them. It would be enough for him to know that a breach had taken place between herself and her hostess that was irreparable. Curiously enough, while Mary was penning her simple despatch to the worthy lawyer, her hostess was also writing a few lines to the same gentleman, upon a widely different subject and dealing with much more important matters.

‘Dear Mr. Rennie,—I have been thinking over our conversation of this morning, and have come to the conclusion that your opinion is the correct one. You may consider my previous instructions—a copy of which you were so good as to send me—as cancelled. My engagement, of course, remains an accomplished fact ; but I shall not settle the fifty thousand pounds, nor, indeed, any sum, upon Mr. Dornay. Your suggestion that he should have a life interest out of the estate is, after all, the most reasonable, and will, I am sure, be quite satisfactory to him. I will communicate with you further upon the matter in a few days.

‘Yours most faithfully,

‘KATE BECKETT.’

‘What a fortunate thing it is,’ reflected the widow, as she sealed her letter, ‘that, though I admitted his name began with a D and ended with a Y, I never told Mr. Rennie which Mr. Dornay it was !’

CHAPTER XIII.

MRS. SOTHERAN.

ALTHOUGH no immediate help or advice could be looked for from Letcombe Dottrel, the need for writing to Mrs. Sotheran seemed to Mary the most imperative of all the matters that pressed upon her attention. She had little doubt, since Mrs. Beckett had said so, that her parentage had not only been obscure but disgraceful. That it was more humble on the one side than on the other she had guessed for herself; partly from what Mrs. Sotheran had told her, and partly from her silence upon the subject. Either her father or her mother had, by their marriage, annoyed certain members of the family of one of them, and what was so likely to have been the cause as an inequality of social position? The effect of this had been, she had been led to understand, disinheritance; and, having this fact in her mind, it is certain that if Edgar Dornay had had either father or mother to say him nay, Mary would never have consented to become his wife. But these conclusions of hers had, it now seemed, been drawn from wrong premises, and Mrs. Sotheran had had a better (or worse) reason for her long reticence as respected her parents than she had ever suspected. It was necessary to resolve all doubt upon this matter, if doubt she could be said to have; though she had to face the world alone, she would do so under no false colours. Pretence and concealment were abhorrent to her. She almost thanked Mrs. Beckett for having opened her eyes, however roughly, to her true position. How terrible it would have been to have suffered Edgar's engagement to have gone on in ignorance of the stain of her birth! She was far, however, from being angry with Mrs. Sotheran, whose silence, she well understood, had been dictated by kindness and consideration.

By the same post by which her note was despatched to Mr. Rennie she wrote to Letcombe Dottrel:

‘My dear Mrs. Sotheran,—A very serious disagreement has taken place between Mrs. Beckett and myself which will at once necessitate my leaving her house; so be so good as to reply to me to the care of Mr. Rennie, who will be in possession of my address. Of the cause of quarrel I cannot write now at any length; let it suffice to say that Mrs. Beckett is angry with me for having encouraged the attentions of a visitor at her house, and has spoken

to me upon the subject in such terms as renders any further communication with her impossible. It is not true that I encouraged his attentions: they were paid to me without the least encouragement; but it is quite true that, but for other circumstances to which it is now unnecessary to allude, I should have accepted them. All that is over now; but what most annoyed Mrs. Beckett, as she gave me to understand, was the difference in social position between myself and the gentleman in question. As I knew of no difference, save the mere conventional ones of rank and money, I defended myself from her reproaches with some spirit. I am not aware of it, but it is possible that I even lost my temper. Then she told me—what I certainly did not know, and which if I had known would have caused me to take a very different view of the case—that I was base-born, “nobody’s child,” as she termed it. Dear Mrs. Sotheran, do not think I blame you for having so long concealed so painful a fact from my knowledge: but is this true? One word will be sufficient—“Yes,” or “No.” It would have been better, far better, had I known it before; but it is absolutely necessary that I should know it now. It will make no difference to me; nothing can make any difference to me.’

Here the girl uttered a deep sigh and laid her pen down upon the table. That last sentence had expressed the whole state of the case as regarded her own feelings. Happy the man, and happier the woman, who has never been forced to utter, from the depths of a bruised heart, ‘nothing can henceforth make any difference to me.’ It is never true, of course; for everything makes a difference; but in that supreme hour of agony and despair in which we hear nothing but the mould upon Hope’s coffin-lid, it seems to be true.

‘I wish to know,’ she went on, ‘my true position in every respect. I have no expectations of any kind, so you need not be afraid of disappointing me. Dear Mrs. Sotheran, this is not, I feel, how I should write to so old and tried a friend, and one to whose kindness I owe so much. Forgive me and be frank with me. However low my lot may be in the world, let me at least stand on firm ground.

‘Yours affectionately,
‘MARY MARVON.’

The tongue of man is but a small member, yet (like Cromwell, who represented Huntingdon) what great things doth it effect! And even still more may this be said of the pen. It is of small consequence who writes with it; it is the thing written which does

the work and remains. Who would think that a few words jotted down in despondency by a penniless girl just turned out of her situation, could affect any one but herself? Human society, however, is but as one great body full of nerves, sensitive in all its parts, and conscious even of a thorn in its foot—which is fortunate, for otherwise some of us would care little on what (or whom) we trod.

That missive of poor Mary's, a mere wail of impotent distress, dropped into the pillar-box by John Thomas with a sniff of contempt for the ex-companion—for every one knew she was 'going'—sorted with ten thousand others as though they were the rags from which they came, but each bearing its message of weal or woe, was fated to cause some commotion.

Its destination was a village in Dorsetshire; its recipient a widow of fifty-five or so, living in a cottage of gentility (though it had no double coach-house) called 'the Bank.' Any dwelling less like a bank it was difficult to imagine; it was very slightly built, and being in a part of the country where thieves were never known to break through and steal, it had neither bolt nor bar belonging to it. The front door was indeed religiously locked every night, but as the two windows on either side of it opened to the ground, and had only outside *jalousies* by way of shutters, the precaution was somewhat superfluous. Above it towered a huge sandbank (from which it took its name) pigeonholed by sand-martins who kept the air about it in a perpetual twitter. A verandah festooned with creepers, now in blossom, ran round the front of the house, which commanded a lovely view. In the foreground, a pretty lawn and garden with a few noble trees; beyond, a vast expanse of landscape with a misty line on the horizon which was the sea.

Half-way down the hill on which the cottage was set, was a confused mass of towers and turrets, betokening the presence of some stately mansion.

The mistress of the cottage, a faded and somewhat sickly looking lady, though with that expression of kindness and good-will which is the dower of a gentle and harmless nature, was watering some flowers in the verandah, when that quick, firm step (at once suggesting haste and burthen) which belongs to postmen, was heard upon the gravel sweep without. She looked up from her occupation with a flush of apprehension; not that she expected bad news, but because from her temperament, and it must be added from her experience—for it had been a sad one—bad news always suggested itself to her more naturally than good news. At the

sight of the missive the man put in her hand, however, her countenance resumed its usual expression. It was only a letter from Mary Marvon. She was glad it was not from Charley, for she had heard from him the day before, and a second letter from him might have betokened something amiss. It did not strike her that there could be anything amiss with Mary.

The girl had fallen into her hands under what Mrs. Sotheran called 'very trying' circumstances; and had at first imposed upon her a responsibility which she had felt to be greater than she could bear; but from the date of that event—which still stood up in her life, otherwise barren of sensational incident, like a pyramid on a plain—all things had gone on smoothly (and far more so than she had ventured to expect) as regarded her young charge.

For eighteen years, Mrs. Sotheran had carried the burthen of the secret of Mary Marvon's birth, shared with her by only one other person; and she was a woman as little fitted for secrets as a cat for draught. Not that she was a gossip—far from it; but she was timid and diffident, unequal to the weight of her own affairs, much more to conduct, or to be privy to, those of other people. She did her duty, but always in fear and trembling, lest she should fall short of it. She had seen her husband and all her children, save Charley, fade and die; she had fought the battle of life with narrow means and little strength, but still without absolute defeat; and yet she shrank from its dangers as though she had been a young recruit, who had never heard a shot fired, or seen the moonbeams sleeping on the upturned faces of the dead. Her spirit was broken, her frame was weak; she 'had had enough of it.' Her one prayer to the Divine Mercy, save for Charley, would have been, 'Take me out of this.'

If there had not been other and stronger reasons for keeping Mary Marvon at a distance, she felt that she would have been no fit companion for a young girl, a flower that needs the sunshine; but she had done her best for her elsewhere, and, on the whole, with success.

There had been no murmurs from Mary; if there had been matters to complain of she had concealed them, and above all she had not troubled her with questions about her past. The knowledge that her parents were dead and that she had no relations who showed any solicitude about her, seemed sufficient for her. There would be some trouble about it doubtless when she married (Mrs. Sotheran always foresaw troubles long before the shadow of them fell upon her); but until then matters promised to go smoothly enough.

Mary's letters, therefore, were among the few things that did not agitate Mrs. Sotheran, or, to use her own homely phrase, 'put her into a pucker'—a moderately cold perspiration. In fact, she rather liked to hear from Mary, who wrote pleasant little records of her doings, anecdotes of the gay world, and opened for her, as it were, a door through which, without being herself observed, she could catch a glimpse of Vanity Fair. And not a letter had come without the narration of some kindness on Mrs. Beckett's part to her *protégée*, for which Mary seemed to thank her original protectress at second hand. As the morning was cool and balmy, Mrs. Sotheran did not go indoors to read her letter, but seated herself on one of the wicker chairs (a present from Charley) which stood on the lawn and afforded an excellent substitute for a garden-bench. She arranged herself, in short, for ten minutes' enjoyment.

Mary's first words, however—'A very serious disagreement has taken place between Mrs. Beckett and myself'—put to flight all hopes of repose. It was curious to see the physical effect produced upon the poor lady as she read on. At first her delicately pencilled eyebrows rose on her forehead and her thin lips emitted a deprecating murmur: 'Dear, dear, what a pity!' Then her features began to stiffen, as it were, into stone; a look of inexpressible pain and fear came into her eyes; and, presently, she dropped the letter on her lap with a groan of dismay. 'Base-born!' Then the secret was out at last—or at least some of it, for that the whole should have to be told was even now a thing not to be thought of. One word said to this poor girl would be sufficient it seemed, 'Yes,' or 'No;' and for that moderation on Mary's part, ill as they had played her, Mrs. Sotheran thanked her stars. It would not at least be necessary to enter into explanations. On the other hand, Mary had concluded her communication with the words, 'Be frank with me. However low my lot may be in the world, let me at least stand on firm ground.'

Alas! there was nothing firm for her to stand on; all was quicksand.

As Mrs. Sotheran pondered over the letter with her eyes fixed on the landscape before her, it faded from her view, and in its place there grew this picture: A small low room sparsely furnished but scrupulously clean: a bed on which lay a young woman, worn with woe and haggard with unceasing pain, but still of exquisite beauty. It was the beauty, however, which death covets; the pallor of the tomb was on her brow; the hectic—

Nature's flag of distress—burnt on her cheek, and the voice was broken and feeble with which she pleaded, 'You will take care of my child, dear friend, till her father comes to claim her?'

'I will,' Mrs. Sotheran had answered eagerly; something had almost prompted her to add, 'I will take care of her whether he comes or not;' for in her heart she did not believe that he would ever come. Twenty-four hours earlier the idea of such a responsibility would have appalled her, and she would have shrunk from it; but a very little time suffices to alter human intentions, whether for good or ill. The receipt of a telegram; a hurried journey; the finding of an old acquaintance, poor, deserted, and at the point of death, had changed the Mrs. Sotheran of yesterday into another woman. She regarded her dying companion with pitiful, yearning eyes; and presently, as though her emotions of compassion could be pent up no longer, she burst into a great sob. 'I did at least hope that he would have married you, my poor, dear girl.'

The hectic flush broadened a little on either cheek; the large eyes, lit with the fever within, became bedewed with tears, and shone like the sun-dew. She raised a skeleton finger for silence. 'Very good, my dear,' continued Mrs. Sotheran; 'I will not say a word against him; it will not be with me that he will have to deal, but with Another. But I do hope that he has made whatever provision lay in his power for the babe.'

The speaker's eye had wandered to a little desk of solid workmanship and bound with steel, as though in that repository might be the legal document at which she hinted.

The dying woman's face had turned to the same direction.

'Do you want the desk, my dear?' The shake of the still shapely head, from which the clustering curls had been ruthlessly shorn, was almost imperceptible; but the other gathered from it that it was not the desk that was wanted.

'The child is asleep,' said Mrs. Sotheran, pointing to a cradle that stood close beside her.

Again there was a shake of the head, and the eyes sought the same object as before.

The only object on the table except the desk was a little Bible; she accordingly brought that to the bedside.

'Kiss it, kiss it,' murmured the dying woman: 'swear to me that you will never seek to learn the contents of that desk, without my—without his—permission.'

Then Mrs. Sotheran did what was very difficult for her—she

took courage. It would have been much more easy for her to give the required promise ; but the reflection that such a course might injuriously affect the child's interest occurred to her ; it must be added, too, that a righteous indignation was burning in her heart against the man of whom they spoke.

'Do you say this, my poor girl, out of fear ? There is none you need fear now but God, remember ; and I humbly hope His wrath has ceased against you.'

'I do not say it out of fear,' answered the other in clearer tones, her anxiety to set this matter right seeming to give her a momentary strength ; 'I say it out of love ; not for his sake,' for Mrs. Sotheran's face had involuntarily darkened, 'but for the child's.'

Then Mrs. Sotheran kissed the book and gave the promise required of her.

It is needless to say she had kept it. Even if, under such solemn circumstances, she had passed her word only, it would not have been broken ; but an oath had for Mrs. Sotheran a significance which, to those accustomed to courts of justice, would have been unintelligible. She really did believe that whomsoever should break it, God would no longer 'help.' To her mind it had even something of the supernatural in it ; it was the one supreme occasion on which, since the age of miracles was past, man and his Creator could still make a compact together. If Mary Marvon's inquiries had required for their answer that Mrs. Sotheran should open that desk, they would without question have remained unsatisfied. Her heart, albeit as tender as one as ever beat in woman's breast, would have been as the nether millstone as regarded any such appeal ; and this, although the man was dead, concerning whom the promise had been given that the desk should not be opened till he came to claim it, and had been dead for many a year.

It was here that the narrowness of this good woman's mind stood out like a ridge of rock in a fertile field. She clung to the letter and not to the spirit ; not, as is the case with most of us, from baseness of disposition, but simply because the letter was dear to her and the spirit was not. The whole incident, contrasting as it did in its dramatic force with the even tenor of her life, had made a very deep impression on her. To one person only she had breathed it, though, even in that case, without mention of her oath ; and this enforced reticence had swelled its proportions. But, as time rolled on and nothing had come of it,

apprehension had ceased ; the matter had lain so long undisturbed in its pigeon-hole, under the dust of years, that it was quite unnoticed—till Mary's letter came, which taught poor Mrs. Sotheran with iron rod that 'there is no such thing as forgetting.'

The perturbation of her mind was such that it was long before she could decide on any course of action ; but, in the end, she rose, and, putting on her bonnet, went out.

Her way led down a winding road between high wooded banks, which after a mile or more reached the plain as a river debouches on the sea ; but half-way down she stopped before some high gates, finely wrought in iron and richly gilded. Without waiting for the lodge-keeper to admit her, she opened a side door and walked rapidly on ; her mind was too fully occupied to take note of external objects ; otherwise, albeit the scene was familiar to her, it could hardly have failed to extort her admiration. She was passing through an avenue of oaks, on one side of which lay a well-wooded park with herds of deer ; on the other, a landscape of exquisite beauty that sloped 'with lessening fields and farms' to the dim, far-off ocean.

Immediately in front, but at the end of a long descent (as became so stately a pile), stood Letcombe Hall, 'the seat' (as it was called in the county history) of the Paton family, now, alas ! bidding fair to be extinct. The grounds about it, of which a complete bird's-eye view was now obtained, were laid out in antique fashion with walled gardens, a huge rosery, and—instead of a croquet or lawn-tennis ground—a bowling-green as smooth as a billiard-table ; all these had their various tenants, male and female ; some seated with books in their hands, some walking, some playing, but all conveying a certain undefined impression that they were no transitory guests. As every one did what they pleased at Letcombe Hall it was called by some folks 'Holiday House ;' but there were people of a cynical turn who, in allusion to the heterogeneous character of its inmates, termed it the 'Menagerie.'

What struck one most, perhaps, as one watched these persons all enjoying themselves in the sunshine (if idleness is enjoyment) was the absence of child-life. The laugh of a child would have cleared the moral atmosphere about this Castle of Indolence, which, truth to say, hung somewhat heavily on it. But, alas ! there were no children at Letcombe Hall. As a young gentleman, to whom we have already been introduced, was wont to say of the

place, 'It was magnificent, no doubt, but too much like a first-class madhouse.'

The building itself was of immense proportions, and, being quite white, shone like a star for many a mile. Round three-fourths of it ran a gigantic stone verandah on pillars of stone so that all the rooms below were cool on the hottest of summer days, and every room above had a spacious balcony.

Before reaching the front door Mrs. Sotheran met more than one group of people and several pairs, all of whom seemed to recognise her. She acknowledged their salutations, but hurried on with frightened looks, without exchanging a word with them. Always shy and retiring, she was on the present occasion extremely apprehensive of meeting a certain person; a fear, as it happened—like most of this poor lady's fears—entirely groundless. She had a habit, however, common enough with persons of her type, of endeavouring to meet her terrors half way, as if by so doing they could be mitigated; and this it was which caused her to inquire, having rung the front door bell with a trembling hand, whether the master of the house was within.

'No, ma'am,' returned the butler, with severe civility. 'Mr. Paton left for town this morning.'

Mrs. Sotheran uttered a sigh of intense relief, which, indeed, shaped itself into the words 'Thank heaven!' She looked so grave and earnest that the man added, 'Some of Mr. Paton's people are to follow by the next train. Perhaps they can take a message.'

'No, no, *no*!' returned Mrs. Sotheran eagerly. If she could have contrived that they should tell him that she had *not* called, that was the statement she would have confided to them. 'I will see your mistress.'

'Mrs. Paton has gone with master to London,' returned the butler.

'Gone! Mrs. Paton gone!' This was terrible and quite unexpected news. The mistress of Letcombe Hall scarcely ever left it, and when she did so it was for the Continent. London, for certain reasons of which Mrs. Sotheran was fully cognisant, was distasteful to her.

'Miss Gwynne is within,' continued the man, taking compassion on the visitor's evident distress. 'But, as you have doubtless heard, Miss Gwynne is about to leave the Hall.'

'I know, I know,' said Mrs. Sotheran. She did know that the young lady alluded to, Mrs. Paton's companion, was no longer on the establishment, since she was going to be married to the vicar of

the parish, but she was not really thinking about Miss Gwynne at all.

‘And when is your mistress expected back?’

‘In about three weeks, I believe, ma’am.’

Mrs. Sotheran nodded and turned away; she had hardly strength enough even to nod, while the information she had just received had literally taken her breath away. Three weeks of self-dependence—which was self-torture—therefore awaited her! Three weeks of unaided reflection! For to write of Mary’s letter to the person it mainly concerned she felt was impossible. To commit such a thing to paper was, or might be, ‘publication,’ from which she shrank as though it involved ten actions for libel. If she had but had Mary’s letter yesterday half the burthen would have by this time been off her shoulders; but, as it was, she must needs bear it alone, and it seemed to crush her to the earth.

On her return she had to run the gauntlet of the guests at the Hall, but this time she felt no embarrassment: in the presence of a great fear the minor emotions sink into insignificance. To all outward appearance she was now as little troubled with *mauvaise honte* as these ladies and gentlemen themselves, whom the departure of their host and hostess had affected not in the least.

Mr. Beryl Paton was often away from home. Letcombe Hall was like the decapitated lady in the German story—everything went on just the same as though it had not lost its head. As for Mrs. Paton, though one or two ordinary folks besides Mrs. Sotheran had a genuine regard for her, she was considered by the company at the Hall, who were all eminent and distinguished persons in their way, as a nonentity.

(To be continued.)

A Chat about Cricket.

BY W. L. MURDOCH, CAPTAIN OF THE ELEVEN OF AUSTRALIAN
CRICKETERS IN 1882.

ALTHOUGH bat and ball have now been packed away and English cricketers are enjoying a well-earned rest after their exertions during the past season—a season which will long be remembered as one of the busiest ever known—still I venture to hope that some remarks from the pen of one who yields to none in his love for the king of games will prove of some interest to the readers of *LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE*.

For some reason or other beyond my powers of explanation cricket is essentially the game of the Englishman, and any attempt on my part to describe its details to English readers, the majority of whom understand the theoretical part of the pastime as well as I, would lay me open to the charge of carrying the proverbial coals to Newcastle. Such is not my intention, nor is it at all necessary for me to reiterate what many writers have truly told us, that to become a good cricketer many attributes are necessary. When a cricketer is recognised as a first-class player, it is a matter of course that he possesses that pluck which tells him that a match at cricket is never lost till it is won, that, no matter how gloomy may be the prospect of a side, victory is always possible. What more striking example of this fact can I adduce than the memorable match, England *v.* Australia? Pluck pure and simple, my experience tells me, has won many a game, which to the casual on-looker may have appeared totally hopeless. Again, to enable a cricketer to attain a place in the first rank he must possess powers of endurance and must, in turf vernacular, be in good 'condition.' It has often struck me before I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. W. G. Grace that he must have been almost in actual training to have played the wonderful innings which have made his name a household word amongst lovers of the game. It is beyond question that many a good batsman loses his wicket simply through lack of 'condition.' There is yet

another quality which a cricketer must possess: he must be amenable to discipline. However distasteful the task may be, and whether he be peer or peasant, all individuality must be put aside, and the one thought which should occupy his mind is the good of his side. There is also needed keen sight, the virtue of patience, good temper, no lack of perseverance, and plenty of pluck and nerve. Of course to attain all these attributes no little amount of self-denial is entailed; but the task must be done, no matter what the cost. Very many pages have been written on this matter, and I will not attempt to augment them.

I have heard that some cricketers would read with interest my ideas concerning the art of batting, that department of the game of cricket which perhaps is most practised by the general body of its votaries. Batting is the branch of cricket which always most pleases the on-lookers, and finds most favour with cricketers themselves. This is quite natural, for what better occupation can the spectator have than witnessing a batsman defying the efforts of bowlers and fieldsmen to dislodge him? and how gratifying it is to the batsman himself to feel that the bat in his hand is the master of the ball! The chief charm of batting undoubtedly is in the great variety of hits which the batsman can make; and I will describe what, in my opinion, is the proper mode of making the many recognised strokes of the game.

One of the first points to consider in the art of batting is undoubtedly the position which the batsman takes at the wicket. Styles of batting when formed are very hard to alter, and great care, therefore, should be taken by the beginner to attain as nearly as possible what is known in cricket parlance as a proper stand at the wickets. To do this the batsman should stand with his right foot just inside the popping crease, as upright as possible, so as to take the greatest advantage of his height, holding the bat not too tightly gripped, but still firmly enough to enable him to hit with full force without the bat turning in his hands.

Every batsman should always bear in mind that the bat must strike the ball, not the ball the bat; it is when a ball has to be played back that this rule is chiefly applicable, for if the ball is allowed to play the bat, it is very likely to go up in the air and bring about the end that the batsman is trying to avoid.

Every straight ball should be met with the full force of the bat, and to do this the old rule should always be remembered: keep the left elbow well up and the left shoulder over the ball. Even to a toss, I would still recommend the same rule, notwithstanding

the temptation to make a fine cut, or a hit to the on, for in numbers of instances have I seen batsmen lose their wicket or hit a catch by striking across at a toss or a long hop. Even with the best and safest batsman it is a bad stroke, and should be avoided. Often have I seen Lockwood and A. Bannerman, two of the best exponents of the short straight ball drag stroke, sacrifice their wickets in attempting it; and in fact I may own to having been guilty of the same offence on more than one occasion. To hit a ball off the leg stump to square leg is very gratifying and pleasing, and is often applauded by cricketers themselves, who, if the batsman miss the ball and has to retire with feelings of chagrin and regret, are the very first to shake their wise heads and condemn the batsman for hitting across at a straight ball.

The beginner should always take great pains to play with a perfectly straight bat. This no doubt wants a lot of practice and cannot be learned at once. The batsman, when in the act of playing, should move his left hand as well round the handle as possible; this position will keep the left elbow well up, and consequently the bat will be as straight as possible; but he should always bear in mind to get well over the ball, and to have the point of the bat towards the stumps. In practising the batsman should never hesitate to ask the bowler whether the bat is straight or not; and if the bowler says he is playing with a cross bat, he should at once look where his hands are, and seeing where the fault lies, alter it.

To practise long at one time is certainly injurious. In my opinion, half an hour morning and evening is quite long enough; if more is indulged in, the batsman gets tired and necessarily becomes careless, and this always ought to be avoided. It is very easy after having your batting to have a turn at wicket-keeping or in the field: either will improve your batting, for it makes the hand and eye work in perfect unison, and will also improve you in fielding, a department of the game which is almost entirely overlooked by cricketers whilst practising. I should advise all young beginners, if they intend to devote themselves to batting, to avoid bowling as much as possible, for I think bowling has a bad effect upon a man's batting; it brings different muscles into play, tires him, and gives the eyes a different conception of the flight of the ball. I have noticed particularly what few instances there are of a first-class bowler being a first-class batsman, and, even with the exceptions, how we find them fall off in one department or the other! I have observed this matter very par-

ticularly, and I am sure that bowling is not conducive to improve the bowler's batting.

The young player has, again, to contend against nervousness and shrinking. Shrinking results from want of knowledge or judgment. One often sees a young player start to play a ball in one way, alter his mind, then shrink away from his wicket and poke his bat at the ball. This can only be overcome by determination, practice, and playing in matches.

If possible, never allow yourself to get between two minds. This important element in batting is one that, in my opinion, will never be thoroughly mastered by any cricketer. It is the hope of catching a batsman in this predicament which enables a bowler, especially upon hard dry wickets, to bowl over after over and perhaps hour after hour, for how many batsmen receive their quietus through this one great fault, which is so easy to give advice about and yet so hard practically to avoid !

The rules then for straight batting, and those which should always be observed, are—first, the right foot fixed, and as near the block-hole without being in front of the wicket as possible; secondly, the point of the bat thrown back to the bottom of the middle stump; and, thirdly, the left elbow well up.

Never treat bowling lightly, and, no matter how bad it may be, always play the strict game, and play every ball in the same way as if it had been delivered by the best bowler of the day. How often does it occur that, when batsmen are set, a bowler is put on who hardly bowls a straight ball, and yet, through the carelessness of the batsman, succeeds in effecting that separation which his side wish for? How many cricketers upon their return to the pavilion have said, 'Why, I could play that bowler all day;' or, 'I could hit him out of the ground every ball,' and yet they do neither the one nor the other, but instead lose their wickets to the very bowler whom they treat carelessly and undervalue !

The half-volley is no doubt a very nice ball to hit, because it meets the bat in the right spot, just after its rise. It is the delight of the big hitter to feel the half-volley on his bat and the next moment to see it soaring away far over the heads of fieldsmen and the people. The half-volley is often treated or attempted in this way, but I should advise it being driven along the ground. This is done by timing your hit well and playing the ball down without wasting its force against the ground.

Of course every player thinks he can hit a half-volley along the ground, but no one can fully appreciate the stroke until he

sees it done by a really first-class batsman. I cannot offer a better example than Dr. W. G. Grace: he does not appear to hit very hard, and in fact he seems to feel for the ball, and then the ball is seen speeding all along the green turf with all the pace of a brilliant hit. As in forward play, hitting well is the whole secret of playing the half-volley correctly.

The tice is a very dangerous ball indeed. I would always recommend a batsman to treat it with respect; it is hard to get away for runs, and the best way to play it is to drop your bat on it, and be contented with stopping it. Some players recommend its being hit on the full, but I think, in advising in this way, their anxiety to obtain runs gets a little ahead of their judgment.

To know when to play forward and when back, and also to time the stroke correctly is without doubt the secret of a batsman's defence. A length ball cannot be reduced to any exact measurement, as it depends upon the reach of the batsman.

Every player knows of one particular length ball that will puzzle him. Of course there are two ways of playing this ball, either forward or back; if forward, play as well out as possible, keeping the bat perfectly straight, and as near the ground as possible without touching it; by doing this you will smother the ball, and stop a shooter. If you find you cannot reach the ball when playing forward, I have always found it a good plan to play a half-stroke, and time it off the pitch. I have often got myself out of a difficulty by this stroke; but I should not recommend it to beginners, as it should only be done in case of doubt. If a ball cannot be reached by forward play it must be played back, and by doing so the batsman has a longer sight of the ball, and he gains time to get up for those balls which keep about bail high or down for a shooter.

Every player should learn to play forward easily, and without loss of balance. Always look at the ball itself, and not merely at the spot where you expect it to pitch. Bring forward your left foot and bat together, avoiding any flourish. Forward play can be practised in a room as well as in the cricket field, and constant practice only will give you the habit of correct decision in playing forward or back. Until you play by habit, you are not safe; the sight of the length must prompt the corresponding movement, and the attitude for off-hit, cut, or leg-hit appear to anticipate each suitable length.

The shooter is no doubt the most destructive of balls. Stopping them depends on the habit of playing at the ball and

not losing sight of it after it pitches. The batsman must not hesitate a moment; if he does he is lost. By playing forward at every ball within your reach you greatly diminish the risk of shooters. But supposing you cannot reach the ball at the pitch, then come back and drop on the ball as quickly as possible. But since the improvement of cricket grounds all over the world, batsmen have less frequently to cope with this dangerous ball.

Several strokes can be made from balls that are pitched on the off side. One stroke is to hit or drive the ball to long-off, a second to drive it between mid-off and cover-point, and a third to make a forward cut between point and cover-point; here it is that the wrist is needed. With all these hits the left foot must be put across; and at the present time, when bowlers place their men on the off side and bowl on what I might term the 'off theory,' batsmen should be very careful what ball they hit at, and when they hit, always try to play it along the ground.

The forward cut is made off a short ball outside the off stump, and to do this, place your left leg over, watch the ball from the pitch, and, moving towards the ball, make your stroke. There is no doubt that the forward cut has its advantages, as you get to the ball with greater quickness, and intercept forward what you would be too late for by going back.

The cut is, without doubt, the best stroke of the game, and one which delights the batsman to make and the on-lookers to see. It is very few that are able to cut perfectly, and with English batsmen I attribute it in a great measure to the very many wet and slow wickets upon which they have to play. Since medium-paced bowling has attained its present proficiency and supremacy over fast bowling cutting has declined, and the ball is played far more in front of the wicket. Cutting is all wrist work, and a ball that may be cut could far more easily be hit on the off. It is most dangerous to cut at the pitch of a ball; it must be by sight at the ball itself. As in all off play, the left leg must be moved across. I have seen some players put the right leg across whilst making the cut, but this is a mistake, as the batsman cannot hit with the same power or certainty, and is far more apt to put the ball in the air. And then again the batsman has to be very observant whilst thinking of the cut, for he must watch for the break; for if he thinks the ball will continue on its course and prepares himself for the cut, he may have the mortification of seeing it break in and hear the dreaded rattle of the wicket as he is bowled out. Avoid cutting at balls too near the wicket, or attempting to

make the old-fashioned stroke of cutting a ball off the bails. Always turn on the basis of your feet and front the ball, and the greater power and force is obtained if you cut down on the ball.

Leg hitting is not so often indulged in as that to the off, simply because the opportunities do not occur so often. The draw is very seldom done or even attempted, it having given place to the glance to leg.

The forward leg-hit is done by advancing the left foot near the pitch of the ball, and then, when struck with a free arm and nearly a straight bat, the ball will go to square leg. When a ball is just within reach the best way is to use your bat so that you will meet the ball just after it has risen. If you cannot reach within a foot of where the ball pitches, sweep your bat in a horizontal position where the ball ought to be. If the ball pitches quite out of reach it should be played back or glanced to leg.

The right foot should always be used as a pivot, and this remark applies to nearly every stroke of the game. After the beginner has attained his correct stand at the wickets, he should begin to learn to move both feet properly and at the right ball, for every batsman should be able to move both feet, especially with slow or medium bowling. I have often heard Spofforth and Boyle remark that if they saw a batsman set fast on his legs he could not play their bowling. A batsman should always be ready to go in to an over-pitched ball, and whilst doing so must have confidence and coolness and never give one thought about the wicket-keeper. It is this very thought that often gets batsmen out, for they go in at a ball, and, suddenly remembering who is behind them, stop short and try to play the ball; the consequence is that the ball is missed and they are stumped out. In going in always go straight to the pitch of the ball, and mind that it is straight, always hitting with a straight bat; never go out of your ground to hit a crooked ball.

Having in the foregoing remarks given in brief form some of my ideas concerning the art—for art it undoubtedly is—of batting, it occurs to me that something in the shape of a *résumé* of the progress of cricket in Australia may not be uninteresting.

That cricket is as much the national pastime of Australia as it is of England, it is hardly necessary for me to say, nor is it very difficult to understand that such should be the case. Love of cricket seems to be part of the very constitution of the average Englishman, and wherever he makes his home there he brings

with him his love of his favourite sport, and directly the opportunity offers itself, he is soon discovered with the flannels donned. This love of cricket the early English colonists not only brought with them to their adopted land, but also transmitted to their descendants, who in their turn have continued the good work.

Very many years ago, we have records of cricket being played in Australia, and though the play may have been most primitive, and pads, gloves, and good rolled wickets blessings then quite unknown, still the players worked with quite as much zest as we of modern times, and no doubt got quite as much enjoyment out of their favourite pursuit as the game now gives its votaries at Lord's or the Oval. Soon after the people of Victoria separated themselves from the parent colony of New South Wales, it occurred to the then leading spirits of cricket in the Colonies that an intercolonial match between elevens representing New South Wales and Victoria would prove the means of developing the number of players, introduce rivalry amongst them, and in the end tend to strengthen the good foundation upon which the game was being built up in popular favour. Matters, after some negotiations, were brought to a crisis, and in 1856 New South Wales sent over to Melbourne her team of cricketers, and the game then played inaugurated the series of those intercolonial matches which ever since have proved so interesting, and to which is in a great measure due the enormous popularity which cricket enjoys all over Australia, a popularity which from year to year seems to increase. As I have said before, these early cricket contests were necessarily primitive. Perhaps the cricket of those days would find little favour with the audience of to-day, but still it was the start of our Australian play, and the next thing needed was a team to teach those who were willing and anxious to learn.

In 1861 this great desideratum appeared in the shape of a team from Old England, the famous All England Eleven, under the captaincy of H. H. Stephenson. This famous eleven are beyond my recollection, but I have often listened with open ear, and mouth too, to the accounts of their doughty deeds: how the eleven easily beat our best twenty-two, and could have done likewise had our team been fifty-two; how this batsman played with the efforts of our then 'Demons,' or that bowler made such sad havoc with the wickets. Englishmen who had seen the England team perform in what they endearingly term the Old Country were frantic with the success of the eleven, which carried all before them. After the tour of the team was completed, the Albert Club of Sydney,

the leading club of the colony, determined to endeavour to improve the style of our play by inducing one of Stephenson's men to accept an engagement as coach. Charles Lawrence was the player to whom the offer was made, and he accepted. The English team returned, and before two years elapsed we had the good fortune to be again visited by an English eleven; this time under the leadership of the famous George Parr, and included in the team was Doctor, then Mr., E. M. Grace, who came to us with the reputation of the best batsman of the world. Parr's tour, like that of his predecessor, was simply a succession of victories; but the cricket of the local men had undoubtedly considerably improved, and gave token, even then, of much greater things, though, at the time, mad beyond cure would have been deemed the individual who would have dared to predict that before twenty years had elapsed the Colonies would be able to send to England a team good enough to contend with her best men. As in the case of Stephenson's team, it was destined that Parr's eleven should not return home complete; for Caffyn, one of the best and prettiest bats of the team, was engaged as coach by the Melbourne Club. Caffyn was just the man cricketers needed at the time; for his style was almost faultless, and, in addition, he had the useful quality of being able to impart to others the knowledge he himself possessed; and the style of play which Caffyn taught our young cricketers of those days is still, in my opinion, clearly discernible amongst the best of the Australian players of to-day. A long period intervened before we again saw a team of cricketers from England; but, in the meantime, the cricketers of the two colonies of New South Wales and Victoria had become pretty evenly matched, and, in consequence, the intercolonial contests fully sustained the public interest in the game. Cricketers began to spring up on all sides, and what with good coaching and the assiduous practice of all concerned, the actual cricket improved in such a wonderful degree that when the next team from England came out in 1873 it was deemed wise to play, in the largest cities, eighteen, instead of twenty-two as hitherto. The English team of 1873, as is well known, was under the command of the greatest cricketer of this or any other age, Dr. W. G. Grace. I can well remember what excitement was caused by the announcement that this famous player was without fail to visit our Antipodean territory. Many 'centuries' were anticipated from his bat; and the question was not how many runs he would score, but how many he would not. However, great

was the surprise when Victoria's eighteen decisively thrashed the Englishmen in a single innings, and greater still was the astonishment when New South Wales also succeeded in gaining a victory. Clearly, Australian cricket in a very few years had made vast progressive strides; and proud indeed were the colonists of the doings of their representatives; and it was hoped that by the time our players had next to measure swords with an English team they would be strong enough to play with decreased odds. James Lillywhite in 1876 brought to Australia the next eleven of England, and these the various colonies met with teams of fifteen and were successful. These successes gave rise to the notion that the eleven of All Australia would be strong enough to hold their own against the redoubtable English players, and accordingly the Melbourne Cricket Club ground in 1877 saw Australia meet England on equal terms, and in addition score a victory. This was, and ever will be, quite an era in the history of Australian cricket, and Charles Bannerman's superb innings of 165 will not readily be forgotten by those whose good fortune it was to witness his play.

That our cricket in something like fifteen years should have been raised to the standard of the pick of English players was looked upon, and justly so, in the Colonies as almost marvellous. Australia had been visited by several English elevens, and the suggestion was now offered that a team from the Antipodes would at least be worthy foemen for the representatives of the English counties. This idea once promulgated was immediately taken up with great zest. Leave of absence was obtained, preliminaries of all sorts arranged, and in 1878, with plenty of pluck and, perhaps, just a spice of audacity, the little band who first bearded the lion in his den and who were the pioneers of Australian cricket in England left their native shore full of determination to leave no stone unturned in their endeavours to sustain and, if possible, advance the honour of Australia in the cricket-field. How far the team carried out their desire the records of the tour, which need no recapitulation, have fully shown; and I may, without egotism, say that the games played by the first Australian eleven, of which I am proud to have been a member, decidedly established the reputation of Australian cricket. Since the year 1878 Australia has been visited by two English teams—one under the captaincy of Lord Harris, and the other led by Alfred Shaw; and in turn the Colonies have sent home the Australian eleven of 1880 and the team which during the season just completed has been fulfilling its tour in England.

That the present Australian eleven is the strongest combination which has represented Australia in the cricket-field I think the records of our tour places beyond doubt; for though our programme in England comprised thirty-eight matches, in nearly all of which we met strong sides, our losing record was only four. And naturally I and my comrades are proud of our success.

Why Australia, with its limited population, could send to the mother country a team able to hold its own against the best cricketers in England is a question often asked. Let me give what I consider the answer. It is hardly necessary for me to tell my readers that the fact of our team playing together for such a considerable time must give us a certain advantage over teams which have not the opportunity for continuous practice together, enables each and every man of an eleven to know his *confrère's* play, and consequently the general working of the whole side is improved. Our team, then, had the advantage of continuous practice together. Again, all our band, I firmly believe, left home with the fixed and firm resolve of straining every effort to do credit to Australia, and we all knew that our doings would be narrowly and anxiously watched by thousands and thousands; and I have no hesitation in saying that this reflection repeatedly spurred us on and helped us to victory. Then our team to a man were always amenable to discipline. There was no striving after individual excellence; all ideas of self were put aside; and, in the knowledge that union is strength, each one did his best to ensure the general good of the side. Our eleven have received many encomiums for what is termed our powers of uphill play; but I do not think that we are any better in this respect than any of our opponents. Certainly, knowing the glorious uncertainty of the game, we were never downcast if we appeared to be in what looked like a bad position. As I have said, a game of cricket is never lost until it is won; and such was the spirit with which our team have always played. Of course, continuous practice, discipline, and pluck, are all very well, but still it was not these qualities only that won our matches. The real secret, I think, of our success lies in the general all-round excellence of our team, each member of which is a staunch and true cricketer. Our chief strength is perhaps to be found in our bowling and fielding; but the team are also strong in batting, and very frequently our 'tail' came to the rescue when the 'good men' had ingloriously failed. We never knew who would be the fortunate one to 'come off,' and I have no hesitation in attributing our success to the

general excellence of our team—of course, at the same time acknowledging that we possessed the advantages to which I have alluded.

Before putting down my pen I should like to publicly state how hospitably our team have been entertained throughout our tour. Kindness upon kindness has been showered on us, and almost everyone we met seemed imbued with the idea that it was imperative upon him to increase the pleasure of our visit. Where all have been so kind, to mention names would be most invidious, and I shall therefore close this, I am afraid, somewhat rambling chat by making these columns the medium of thanking the very many good souls whom we met in England, and whose kindness made our stay enjoyable beyond description.

The New Pygmalion, or the Statue's Choice.

A LYRIC DRAMA.

'l'image que fist Pymalion,
Qui n'ot pareil premiere ne seconde.'

PERSONS IN THE PLAY.

PYGMALION, a Sculptor of Cyprus.

APHRODITE.

A Sculptor's Ghost.

Statue (afterwards GALATÆA).

SCENE.—PYGMALION'S *Studio*. *A chryselephantine Statue of a Woman on a pedestal. PYGMALION discovered, heaping incense on an altar at the foot of the pedestal. His costume is sumptuous, and his attitude graceful.*

PYGMALION (*prays*).

OH, Aphrodite, kind and fair,
That what thou wilt canst give,
Oh, listen to a sculptor's prayer,
And bid mine image live !
For me the ivory and gold
That clothe her cedar frame
Are beautiful, indeed, but cold ;
Ah, touch them with thy flame !
Oh, bid her move those lips of rose,
Bid float that golden hair,
And let her choose me, as I chose,
This fairest of the fair !
And then an altar in thy court
I'll offer, deck'd with gold ;
And there thy servants shall resort,
Thy doves be bought and sold !

[*He throws incense on the flame of the altar.*

Exit PYGMALION.

*A Sculptor's Ghost rises, a sordid figure stained with clay.
He peers cautiously around, shuts the trap-door, and kneels
at the altar.*

Sculptor's Ghost (prays). O Aphrodite! hear him not,
But turn his words to wind,
And bid this image without spot,
My work, to me be kind.
O goddess! lady of all lands,
Let this fair maid be mine,
For mine the thought, and mine the hands,
That wrought the work divine.

*[Throws incense on the flame, and disappears
by trap-door.*

*The incense smoke thickens, rises into a column, and takes the
form of APHRODITE floating among her doves.*

Aphrodite (to the Statue). O maiden, in mine image made!
O grace that shouldst endure!
While temples fall, and empires fade,
Immaculately pure:
Exchange thine endless life of art
For beauty that must die,
And blossom with a beating heart
Into mortality!
Change, golden tresses of her hair,
To gold that turns to grey;
Change, silent lips, for ever fair,
To lips that have their day!
Oh, perfect arms, grow soft with life,
Wax warm, ere cold ye wane;
Wake, woman's heart, from peace to strife,
To love, to joy, to pain!

*[The Statue moves, and lifts her arms in the
attitude of adoration.*

Statue. What world is this I know not of,
What flutters in my breast?

Aphrodite. 'Tis thy first hour of life and love,
Thy last of dreamless rest!

Descend, and leave thy marble shrine ;
 Lo ! this one day thy birth
 And wedding brings ; no more divine
 Shalt thou inhabit earth !
 And thou shalt love the man who wrought
 Thine image in such wise
 That neither new-born life, nor thought
 Add beauty to thine eyes.

[*The Goddess fades into the altar smoke.*]

Enter PYGMALION. He throws himself at the feet of the Statue, who advances to embrace him.

Statue. Ah, who then made me,—was it thou ?
 And who made *thee* so fair ?

Pygmalion (with presence of mind). I wrought thee, maiden,
 even now,

From dreams, and clouds, and air !
 And thou, that wert my statue, art
 My bride while life endure !

Statue. A woman with a child-like heart,
 ‘And passionately pure !’ [*Sculptor’s Ghost rises.*]

Ghost. Believe him not—believe him not,
 Celestial apparition ;

I made thee—I ; *he* only got
 (Confound him !) the commission !

Pygmalion. Nay, rich men, tyrants, ladies fair,
 Have seen me working daily on
 Thine image ; and in court will swear
 The sculptor was—Pygmalion !

Ghost. I did the sketch ; that scented wretch
 Me of mine own would rob ;
 Concealed I lurk, and do the work,
 When he’s secured the job.

Pygmalion. High priests have watched me modelling,
 Improving chins and noses !
 Begone, thou dull, opprobrious thing,
 Thou serpent ’mid the roses !

Ghost. Ere *he* can toil he needs a ‘squeeze,’
 A skull upon a stick !
 While independent quite of these
 I always do the trick !

- Statue.* Myself will choose : couldst *thou* design
 And finish, furtive one,
 Another shape as fair as mine,
 To look upon the sun ?
- Ghost.* Why, give me time, and give me clay,
 And ivory, and gold,
 And girls like thee, in bright array,
 All Cyprus shall behold.
- Statue.* And *thou*, Pygmalion, couldst thou frame
 My shape from gold and wood ?
- Pygmalion.* I could not, ah, transcendent dame,
 And would not, if I could !
- Statue.* Then thine am I ! That envious Ghost
 Could fashion, so says he,
 A troop of girls, a perfect host,
 That might compete with *me* !
 But thou, my sculptor, thou mine own,
 Hast no such cursèd art,
 And I will be thy bride alone,
 All thine this eager heart ! [*They embrace.*]

Exit Ghost, swearing in Greek, Etruscan, and Hittite.

CURTAIN.

A. LANG.

About Sisterhoods.

I slept, and dreamed that life was Beauty;
I woke, and found that life was Duty.

THIS couplet—I know not whence it comes—was the favourite axiom of a dear old friend of mine, and the key-note of her noble and sorely-tried life of over eighty years. As I sit writing, watching the same hills and the same beautiful river that she watched until she died, it seems a fitting motto for a few words I have long wished to say, and which a chance incident has lately revived in my mind.

A young lady, who had been for some time a ‘postulant’ in one of those Anglican Sisterhoods which their friends so much admire, their foes so sharply condemn, wrote to me that she was about to enter there as a novice, and wished me to be present at the service. These two words were my only clue as to what kind of ceremony it would be, and what sort of novitiate the girl was about to begin. A ‘girl’ still to me, for I had held her in my arms when only a day old; but in truth she was a woman of thirty, quite capable of judging, deciding, and acting for herself. She had had a hard life, was claimed by no very near ties or duties, and I had felt a satisfaction in her having had the courage to choose a decided vocation—at once a refuge and an occupation, for her Sisterhood bore the name of Orphanage of Mercy. Whatever her life there was or might be, it could not be an idle life. I had a certain sympathy with it, which prompted me at once to say I would go; and I went.

It was one of those grey, wet, summer days which always strike one with a melancholy unnaturalness, like a human existence lost or wasted. As I stood in the soaking rain before a large monastic building, the door of which was opened by a nun-like portress, I was conscious of a slight sensation of pain at the difference between this and a bright, happy family home. But not all homes are bright and happy, and not all—nay, very few—wives and mothers have the placid, contented smile of the Sister who came to welcome me in the parlour—a regular convent-

parlour or 'parloir,' which is what the word originally came from.

She explained that Sister —— (*my girl*) was 'in retreat,' and could see no one till after the service; and then we stood talking for several minutes about her and about the Orphanage. The Sister's dress, manner, and indeed the whole atmosphere of the place, were so essentially monastical, that I involuntarily put the question, 'Are you a Catholic?'

'Not Roman Catholic,' she answered, after a slight hesitation. 'We belong to the Catholic Church—the Church of England.'

Verily—shall I add, wisely?—our mother Church of England shelters under her broad wings many diverse broods—if they only could keep from pecking one another! When I found myself in the chapel, it seemed at first exactly like one of those chapels that we see in Norman cathedrals—a high altar brilliantly lighted, and adorned with white lilies, the faint sweet smell of which penetrated everywhere and mingled with that of incense. But there were none of those paltry or puerile images that abound in Roman Catholic churches; nothing except the great crucifix, the common sign of all Christians. Protestant—in the sense of Luther and Calvin, and of modern Low Church and Presbyterianism—the place certainly was not; but no unbiassed eye-witness could have seen any tokens of Mariolatry or saint-worship about it, or in the service held therein.

Gradually the whole chapel filled with Sisters, who I saw were divided into three classes—the black-veiled, the white-veiled, and the postulants, or probationers. These latter wore the dress of ordinary young ladies, while the Sisters were undeniably nuns; in their plain black gowns and white or black veils of some soft-falling, close-fitting material—a costume as becoming, and probably as comfortable, as any woman can wear. It seemed to suit all faces, young and old, and some were quite elderly and not too beautiful; but every one had that peculiar expression of mingled sweetness and peace, which—let the contemptuous world say what it will—I have found oftener on the faces of nuns—Catholic *Petites Sœurs des Pauvres*, or Protestant Sisters of Charity—than among any other body of women that I know. A fact, which I neither attempt to account for nor argue from, but merely state it as a fact, which few close observers at home or abroad will deny.

After a somewhat long pause of waiting, and reading of the printed service which was given us, there was a slight stir and turning of heads. A distant chanting of female voices (some, I

own, a trifle out of tune) announced the procession—very like the processions with which we are familiar in foreign churches, save that there were only two priests and no acolytes. The rest were Sisters; except two young ladies dressed in full bridal costume, who, with a motherly nun behind them, came and knelt before the altar. Neither looked excited nor agitated; and when the service began, with a series of solemn questions, something like those of a marriage ceremony, in the answers I recognised the voice of *my* girl, perfectly natural, collected, and firm.

The chaplain, or priest—his vestments were very like a Roman Catholic priest's, but every word he uttered might have come from an evangelical pulpit—calling each by her Christian name—I had given my girl hers and would have been loth she should abjure it—asked if she were joining this community of her own free will? if she would take the vow of obedience to its rules? with a few other similar questions, to which she answered distinctly, 'I will, God being my helper.' Afterwards the dress of each—gown, veil, and cross—was brought to the altar and blessed, and the two girls went out, during the singing of a hymn. There was no cutting off of hair, or prostration under a black pall—as in Catholic countries—merely the change of dress.

But that was very great. When the procession re-entered, including the two newly-received Sisters, who walked up and knelt at the altar, with lighted tapers in their hands, I hardly recognised my girl, so spiritualised was her honest rosy face by the picturesqueness of the close white veil, and by her expression of entire content—as sweet as that I have seen on some young brides' features as they went down the aisle to the church-door.

'Are you really content?' I said, when, service being ended, she came to me, in a large room, where Sisters, clergy, and friends were standing about, taking tea or coffee and chatting in a most mundane and secular fashion. 'Are you quite satisfied?'

'Perfectly,' she answered; and kissed me and her other friends and kindred, not without emotion, but with no excitement or exaltation; indeed, she was the last person in the world to be what the French call *exaltée*, or to give way to romantic impulses of any kind. 'But you must come to speak to the Mother. I do want you to see our Mother. It is she who has done it all.'

By which was meant the Orphanage—established almost entirely by this one woman's influence and energy. And when I saw the Mother I was not surprised.

Some people strike you at once with their personality, physical

and mental, which carries with it an influence that, you feel, must affect every one within their reach. Tall, stately, and beautiful—the beauty of middle-age just melting into old age—with a face that I can only describe by saying that it reminded me of Cardinal Newman's—of few words, but with a clasp of the hand and a smile beyond all speaking, I could understand how the Mother was just the woman to be head of a community like this.

I had a little talk with her, and also with the officiating priest—chaplain, 'spiritual director' the anti-Ritualists would call him; but, if a wolf in sheep's clothing, he looked the most harmless of vulpine foes, as he stood sipping his coffee and chatting to his cheerful flock, who fluttered around him as women always will round a clergyman, even in 'the world.' This, though a quasi-nunnery, seemed a very merry world, and all the nuns went about conversing much as people do at afternoon teas and garden parties, except that there was not one who had that jaded, bored, or cross look so often seen on the faces of the rich prosperous people who have nothing to do.

'We have plenty to do—oh yes! We have nearly two hundred orphans. We take them in from anywhere or anybody. One was picked up on a doorstep—another on a dust-heap. No recommendation is needed except that they are orphans, and destitute. We feed, clothe, and educate them until they are old enough to work, and then we find them work, chiefly as domestic servants. Come and look at them.'

Orphanages are at best a sad sight: the poor little souls seem such automatons, brought up by line and rule, without any human individuality, just No. 1, No. 2, No. 3—of no importance to anybody. But this class—a sewing-class I think it was, chiefly of big girls, who rose with bright faces and showed their work with intelligent pride—was something quite different. More different still was the long procession of 'little ones' which we met as they were going out of the chapel to supper and bed.

'Children, don't you know me?' said the new-made Sister, stopping the three smallest—such tiny dots!—and calling them by their Christian names. They hesitated a minute, then with a cry of delight sprang right into her arms. She held them there: one over her shoulder, the other two clinging to her gown. Three orphans and a solitary woman, husbandless, childless, laughing and toying together, kissing and kissed, they made a group so pretty, so happy—so full of God's great mercy, compensation,—that it brought the tears to one's eyes.

After having gone over the whole establishment, which I shall not describe, wishing neither to individualise nor to identify it, I went away; feeling that there was a great deal to be said—much more than we Protestants till lately had any idea of—on behalf of Sisterhoods.

I slept, and dreamed that life was Beauty;
I woke, and found that life was Duty.

Alas! this is the experience of almost every woman who has any womanly qualities in her, long before she reaches old age! How to combine the two—how to arrange her life so that duty shall not draw all the beauty out of it, while mere beauty shall always be held subservient to duty—this is the crucial test, the great secret which must be learned during those years—most painful years they often are!—between the first decay of youth and the quiet acceptance of inevitable old age. If age comes and finds the lesson unlearned, then it is too late.

Marriage is held to be the great end of a woman's being, and so it is. Few will deny that the perfect life is the married life—the happy married life—though I have heard people say that 'any husband is better than none.' Perhaps so; in the sense of his being a sort of domestic Attila, a 'scourge of God' to 'whip the offending Adam' out of a woman and turn her into an angel, as the wives of some bad husbands seem to become. But, in truth, any wife whose husband is not altogether vicious has a better chance of being educated into perfection, through that necessary altruism which it is the mystery of marriage to teach, than a woman sunk in luxurious single-blessedness, who has no work to do, and nobody to do it for, and so seems almost compelled into that fatal selfishness which is at the root of half the evils and miseries of existence.

Thus we come back to the great question, becoming more difficult as we advance in—shall we call it civilisation? Those women who do not marry, what are they to do with their lives?

For some of them Fate decides, often severely enough, laying on them the sacred burthen of aged parents, or helpless brothers and sisters, or orphan nephews and nieces. Others, left without natural duties or ties, have the strength to make both for themselves. I know no position more happy, more useful (and therefore happy) than that of a single woman, who, having inherited or earned sufficient money and position, has courage to assume the

status and responsibilities of a married woman. She has, except the husband, all the advantages of the matronly position, and almost none of its drawbacks. So much lies in her power to do, unhindered, especially the power of doing good. She can be a friend to the friendless and a mother to the orphan; she can fill her house with happy guests, after the true Christian type—the guests that cannot repay her for her kindness. Free to dispose of herself in all ways, she can be a good neighbour, a good citizen—whether or not she attains the doubtful privilege of female suffrage. Her worldly goods, her time, and her affections are exclusively her own, to bestow wisely and well. Solitary, to a certain extent, her life must always be; but it need never be a morbid, selfish, or dreary life. I think it might be all the better for our girls of this generation, which understands the duties and destinies of women a little better than the last one, if we were to hold up to them—since they cannot all be wives and mothers—this ideal of a happy single life, which lies before any girl who either inherits an independence, or has the courage and capacity to earn one.

But such cases are, and must always be, exceptional. The great bulk of unmarried women are a very helpless race, either hampered with duties, or seeking feebly for duties that do not come; miserably overworked, or disgracefully idle; piteously dependent on male relations, or else angrily vituperating the opposite sex for their denied rights or perhaps not undeserved wrongs. Between these two lies a medium class, silent and suffering, who have just enough money to save them from the necessity of earning it, just enough brains and heart to make them feel the blankness of their life without strength to obviate it—longing for some occupation, and yet unable to strike out a career for themselves, and cheat Fate by making it neither a sad nor useless one. It is for these stray sheep, sure to wander if left alone, but safe enough in a flock with a steady shepherd to guide them, that I open up for consideration the question of Sisterhoods.

The mediæval system of nunneries, where, from a combination of motives, good and bad, religious and worldly, girls were separated from all family ties and dedicated to the service of God, might have had its advantages in the middle ages, but can never be revived now, at least not, we trust, in our free England. It cannot be too strongly insisted that the family life is the first and most blessed life, and that family duties, in whatever shape they come, ought never to be set aside. Also that the service of

God is best fulfilled through the service of man—the utilising of an aimless existence for the good of others. But to this end is often needed the strength of community. The mass of women are not clever enough, or brave enough, to carry out anything single-handed. Like sheep, they follow the leader; they will do excellent work if anyone will find it for them, but they cannot find it for themselves. How continually do we hear the cry, ‘I want something to do;’ ‘Tell me what to do, and I’ll do it!’

Of course, a really capable woman would never ask this; she would under no circumstances be idle—she would find her work, or make it. But for one such, capable of organising, guiding, ruling, there are hundreds and thousands of women fitted only to obey, to whom the mere act of obedience is a relief, because it saves them from responsibility. To them a corporate institution, headed by such a woman as the Mother of that Orphanage of Mercy I visited, is an actual boon. It protects them from themselves—their weak, vacillating, uncertain selves—puts them under line and rule, gives them the shelter of numbers and the strength of a common object. It is astonishing what good can be done by a community, who, as individuals, would have done no good at all.

An institution which absorbed the waifs and strays of gentlewomanhood—ladies of limited income and equally limited capacity, yet excellent women so far as they go, which could take possession of them, income and all, saving and utilising both it and themselves—would be a real boon to society. For what does not society suffer from these helpless excrescences upon it—women with no ties, no duties, no ambitions—who drone away a hopeless, selfish existence, generally ending in confirmed invalidism, or hypochondria, or actual insanity—for diseased self-absorption is the very root of madness. It is a strange thing to say—but I dare to say it, for I believe it to be true—that entering a Sisterhood, almost any sort of Sisterhood where there was work to do, authority to compel the doing of it, and companionship to sweeten the same, would have saved many a woman from a lunatic asylum.

But it must be the ideal Sisterhood, not that corruption of it as seen in foreign countries which rouses the British ire at the very name of nun. It must be exactly opposite in many things to the Roman Catholic idea of a girl giving up ‘the world’ and becoming ‘the spouse of Christ.’ Many a wife and mother belonging to and living in the world is just as much the spouse of Christ—if that means devoting herself to good works for the love of Him—as any vowed nun.

Besides, a Sisterhood ought never to be composed of girls, but of women old enough to choose their own lot, or submit to Fate's choosing it for them, who either cannot or will not marry; who have no near ties, but need the support and sweetness of adopted affections and extraneous duties. Such women only should be admitted. It may be very pleasant to escape from the irksomeness of tending a crabbed parent's declining years, or enduring the ill-humours of an invalid brother or sister, in order to dedicate oneself to general philanthropy, to put on a picturesque dress and devote one's days to good deeds and choral services; but this ought not to be allowed. Family ties should always come first, and any Sisterhood which attempts to break them merits severe reprobation.

In the Life of Sister Dora it is said that she was prohibited from going to the death-bed of her own father, and sent off to nurse some other person, by order of her Superior. And throughout her most touching and heroic history runs a certain feeling that with her the domestic and human feelings were always held subservient to those of her vocation. This should not be. I was glad to hear my girl say that immediately after her novitiate began she was to go for a month to be with a young married sister in her hour of trial. And in answer to another question of mine she answered, 'Oh, yes, our Mother will let me come and see you whenever you please.'

This, the liberty of visiting friends, ought—subject to fit regulations—to be an essential element in all Sisterhoods. So also should be the right of returning entirely to the world, if they so choose. Some sort of vow, or promise, must be made—else the community would dwindle into a mere religious boarding-house. But the vow ought to be, like that of marriage, absolutely binding while it lasts, and intended to last in permanence, yet with the possibility of dissolution did circumstances require it—a possibility which is practically a certainty, since by our English laws no conventual establishment can detain its inmates for life, or against their own will.

And besides being women of an age to exercise their own discretion, they ought to be allowed full time to do so. My girl had been some time resident with the Sisterhood before she assumed the white veil; and three or four years more, she told me, must pass before she 'made her profession' and was allowed to take the black veil. 'And then?' I said. 'Even then we could break our vows; but,' with a quiet smile, 'I think none of

us ever do,'—which is common sense also. After seven years' trial, and being already past middle age, most women would feel that their lot was settled, and have no mind to change it.

Another absolute law of the ideal Sisterhood must be work. In this nineteenth century we cannot go back to the mediæval notions of ecstatic mysticism or corporeal penitences. I am sure the respectable Sisters of the Orphanage of Mercy neither flagellate themselves, nor wear hair shirts, nor sleep on cold stones, nor rise at one in the morning to chant litanies. So far as I could see, these ladies live a simple, comfortable, wholesome life—such as will best maintain their own health, that they may use it for the good of others.

And truly this ought to be the primary object of Sisterhoods. Not merely religion—and yet I doubt if a purely secular Sisterhood would long exist; since, as a hospital nurse once said to me, 'To do our work well, we must do it for the love of God.' But it must be done, also, for the love of man; that 'enthusiasm of humanity' which prompts men—and women especially—to devote themselves to charitable labours. Every religious community ought to have such; distinct secular work; and a community of women contains so many difficult elements, that nothing but work and plenty of it, guided by a head which is competent to keep the machine perpetually going, will save it from collapse.

The secondary advantage of a Sisterhood is, I hold, the involuntary refuge it offers for the affections. Men may do without loving—women cannot. When natural ties and natural duties no longer exist for them, they take to dogs, cats, and parrots, or wither up into the typical 'old maid'—a torment to herself, and to everybody about her. Now, a woman in a Sisterhood, with the daily companionship of other women, absorbed in daily work among the old, the sick, or the poor—to say nothing of the young, who are the elixir of life to a worn heart—down to these depths of miserable uselessness no such woman could ever fall. When I think of my girl with her orphans round her, beaming down upon them with a true maternal smile, I have no fear for her happiness, though she is an old maid.

A Sisterhood should combine, if possible, Beauty with Duty. I was glad to see that this particular Sisterhood had made their own dress, and that of their orphans, as picturesque as possible; that their building within and without was not only convenient but elegant, and their chapel and its service beautiful—as God's house should be. And why not? Who can look round on this

lovely outside world without feeling that its Creator meant us to love beauty, to crave after it, and to attain it whenever possible? The Low Church Bible-woman, who goes about in her rusty black, with a bundle of tracts in one hand and a basket in the other, is a most useful and honourable person; but the lady in a nun's dress, or with the white cross of the hospital nurse, carries with her a certain atmosphere of grace which cannot be without its influence even upon the roughest natures. In our ardent pursuit of the Good, we are apt to forget, especially as we grow older, that its power is doubled when it is allied to the Beautiful.

Of course, if all women were strong enough to live and work alone, to carry out their own individual life and make the best of it, without leaning on anyone else, there would be no need for Sisterhoods. But it is not so. Very few women can take care of themselves, to say nothing of other people. Some say this is the fault of Nature, some of education—a centuries-long education into helpless subservience. Whichever theory is right, or perhaps half right and half wrong, the result comes to the same.

Therefore, for such the life in community is eminently desirable. It provides shelter, under the guardianship of a capable head; companionship, for only the strong and self-dependent are able to endure, permanently, their own company—and perhaps even for them this is not always good; it gives them objects on which to expend their barren and shut-up affections; and lastly, it supplies work, that definite and regular work which is the best solace of sorrow, the best safeguard against temptation, the only efficient help to that ideal condition of a 'sound mind in a sound body' which all women, however feeble their minds and ugly their bodies, should strive for to the very end of life.

These advantages—not small, even though weighed against many disadvantages—were no doubt the reason why, for so many centuries, conventual establishments flourished, and still flourish, in Catholic countries. When our Protestant horror of them has a little subsided, we may learn—indeed, in many instances we are already learning—to eliminate the good from the evil, and make use of, without abusing it, *Hamlet's* not altogether unwise advice to Ophelia, 'Go, get thee to a nunnery—go—go—go!'

And some of us, who set sail so gaily for the natural port, but never found it, and now drift hither and thither, helmless and hopeless, upon the world's desolate sea—some of us would, perhaps, be not sorry to go there, nor the worse for going. It is the old fable of the bundle of sticks; in which the feeble stick, the

crooked stick, the broken stick can bind itself up; and by association with others stronger than itself, be able to cure its own deficiencies and do good service to the end of its days.

Perhaps these few words of mine will draw from other and abler pens some definite opinions and suggestions about Sisterhoods.

THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN.'

Some Points in American Speech and Customs.

II.

IN my former article I said something as to some points of difference between British and American usage in matter of language and in other matters closely connected with language. Now points of language almost imperceptibly glide into points of custom ; and in points of custom, as well as in points of language, much that we are apt to look on as distinctively American is simply older English usage which we have dropped. In some cases, it is true, the dropping has been on the other side. We are struck in America with the constant absence of ceremony on public occasions where we should have looked for some measure of form and state. Closely as the forms and processes of American law conform to our own, we are amazed at seeing, everywhere, as far as I know, except in the Supreme Court of the United States, judges sitting, not only without wigs but without gowns. There seems indeed to be a general dislike to the wearing of any kind of official dress. In matters of this kind I fancy that a good deal has been consciously dropped out of a notion of 'republican simplicity.' This is a notion which I cannot enter into. Whatever honour a free commonwealth shows to its chosen magistrates is surely honour done to itself. If I were to speak of the magistrates of old Rome, with their lictors and their official ornaments, I might be told that Rome, if a commonwealth, was an aristocratic commonwealth. But there never was a purer democracy than that of Uri, and the Landammann of Uri keeps—at least he kept eighteen years back—no small measure of official state. And indeed, even in the United States themselves, some measure of official pomp cannot be got rid of on all occasions. I have seen the Governor of Massachusetts enter his capital, undecorated certainly as far as his own person was concerned, but otherwise surrounded by a degree of pomp and circumstance which reminded me of the triumph of Marcus Furius Camillus.

And, in private life, the American strikes me as, on the whole, more ceremonious than the Englishman on this side of the Ocean. And in some cases certainly the difference is due to the fact that England has dropped ceremonial usages which have lived on in America. Take the commonest forms of address. The British visitor in America is a little surprised at being called 'Sir' in private life, at all events at being called so a great deal oftener than he ever is in his own island. The word perhaps grates a little on his ears. But he has only to turn to his Boswell to see that America has in this small matter simply kept on an usage which England has dropped. And this is a matter in which England stands almost alone in the world. The Frenchman, at all events, has his 'Monsieur,' 'Madame,' and 'Mademoiselle,' ever on his lips, in a way which the Englishman finds it a little hard to follow. In England we seem to have a growing tendency to get rid of the vocative case altogether. And in the many cases when a man is not quite sure what is the right formula to use, when, for instance, he is inclined to familiarity but is not quite sure whether familiarity will be welcome, it is wonderful how long he may go on without ever using the vocative. And without going to this extreme, it is certainly not thought elegant in England to indulge very greatly in its use. No one wishes his name or title to be brought in with every breath. But in America, besides the use of 'Sir' in a way which has died out in England, no one can fail to remark the supposed necessity of giving everybody some kind of title. Now it must always be remembered that the strongest sign of the inherent love of titles is to be found, not in the use of titles like Duke, Bishop, General, but in the use of plain 'Mr.,' 'Mrs.,' and 'Miss.' The higher titles are not mere titles; they state a fact about the man to whom they are applied; they tell you that he is a bishop, a duke, or a general. But 'Mr.,' 'Mrs.,' and 'Miss' tell you nothing; they are mere means to avoid the supposed impropriety of calling people, as of old at Athens and now in Iceland, simply by their names. In America it is distinctly harder than it is in England to get people with whom you are really intimate to drop the 'Mr.,' and use simply the surname. And I noticed that men who were thoroughly intimate with one another, men who were old friends and colleagues, spoke of and to one another with handles to their name, in a way in which men in the same case would not do here. On the other hand, in the newspapers men are constantly spoken of by their mere Christian and surnames in a way to which we are not used

in print. But in my own experience it was a relief when I escaped with simple 'Mr.' I generally had to writhe under the horrible titles of 'Professor' or 'Doctor.' Why anybody should mistake me for a professor, or why anybody should thrust the title of 'Doctor' on the bearer of a purely unprofessional and honorary degree, was beyond my understanding. I asked not uncommonly whether they talked of 'Dr. Gladstone.' I could not find that anybody did, nor did I find that other English bearers of honorary degrees were so spoken of; the name seemed somehow to be thrust on me in a special way. In one famous university town I was able to turn the tables on my friends, and to ask them why they should either call me 'Professor' or wish to be called 'Professor' themselves, when there was in their own city a 'Professor Parker,' showing off dancing dogs. In some parts a stranger is commonly addressed as 'Colonel' or 'Judge.' I was never addressed as 'Colonel,' save once at Baltimore, and that in the dark; so it was hardly because of any specially military air about me. 'Judge' I never was called; though, as I happen to have something to do with judging, while I have nothing to do with teaching, it would have been one degree less out of place than 'Professor.' But, though these strange titles are a little trying to a stranger, the application of them is thoroughly well meant, according to the custom of the country. It seems as if no one in America could do without some kind of handle. We are used to 'Governor A.'; but 'Mayor B.' sounds to us odd. But more than once, when I had been introduced to 'Governor A.' and had put myself into a proper mood of respect towards the Chief Magistrate of the State, I found that all that was meant was that the gentleman to whom I was speaking had been Governor in times past. In language that is at all precise it is counted more correct to say in such cases 'Ex-Governor'—as if one should say 'Ex-High-Sheriff B.'—but the 'Ex-' is certainly often dropped. And the title given to the husband often extends to the wife. I have seen 'Mrs. Professor' on a lady's card, and the newspapers sometimes tell one how 'Mrs. Ex-Senator A.' went somewhere with her daughter 'Mrs. Senator B.' Again it is not always easy to remember all among the large class of people who are called 'Honourable'; and I found that 'Esquire' as an address was chiefly applied to lawyers. Among these, by the way, the formula 'Attorney- and Counsellor-at-law,' preserving two names which in England have perished, is quite the right thing. I was little surprised at the vanishing of 'Esquire.'

'George Washington, of Mount Vernon, Esq.' was a description with which I was quite familiar, and I had often seen the title 'Esquire' in American books and stories. But there is a trace of its earlier use in the phrase commonly used in some States of 'being brought before the squire,' meaning before a magistrate of any kind.

Now this lavish use of titles is universal; so it is to be supposed that people like it. Yet in one most distinguished University I was told by more than one professor that he liked better to be addressed simply as a gentleman, or better still as a man, without any official title. But the really important point is that, in this matter also, American usage is older than English usage, and is certainly more consistent. We have the practice of other European nations against us. Thick on the ground as handles are in America, they are still thicker in Germany, and they are much more freely extended to men's wives. Then in America and in Germany the thing is thoroughly carried out; in England it is hard to find out the principle on which the handle is sometimes used and sometimes not. As to the wives, our rule seems to be that, while any kind of rank which is strictly personal, whether hereditary or not, any rank from duke to knight or even esquire, is shared by the wife, strictly official rank is not. The dignity of the bishop, the judge, the sheriff, is not shared by his wife. Yet there is one notable exception. The Mayoress, in London and York the Lady Mayoress, has her undoubted place, and in London at least the dignity is transferable; the Lady Mayoress may chance to be, not the wife, but the daughter or sister of the Lord Mayor. Now 'Mrs. Professor' sounds very ugly to us; but in Germany 'Frau Professorin' is universal, and it is hard to see how she differs in principle from the Lady Mayoress. Then again it sounds odd to British ears to hear a young lady spoken to or of by any one above the rank of a servant or other inferior, as 'Miss Mary.' But this again was once universal, if not with the modern 'Miss,' yet certainly with the older 'Mistress.' The last form at least is graceful, and so it sounds in some other tongues, in Greek above all.

If there is any rule of precedence in private American society, I was not able to catch it. But I was once a little amazed at the question of a most cultivated American lady, one who knows England well, whether in England any one who might be supposed to be at all personally known did not feel annoyed at being placed after a man of higher rank who had no claim to distinction

beyond that of being of higher rank. In England, where the virtual ruler of the country holds a formal position far below many whose higher position is his own gift, the thought probably never enters into any man's head. I could only tell my questioner that I could not answer for others, but that such a thought had certainly never come into my own head. I said that I no more thought of repining because A. or B. was of higher rank than myself than I thought of repining if he were younger or taller or handsomer than I was. In either case facts are facts, and the facts are no fault either of his or of mine. I told her that in such a case no kind of wrong was done, no affront was meant or thought of on either side, that the whole thing was a matter of course, like an order of nature, of which nobody thought at all. But I found that the American lady did not in the least enter into my feelings.

! The rare use of the word 'esquire' may have something to do with the total, or nearly total, disappearance of the thing. There certainly once were country-gentlemen in the North as well as in the South. And, from a hill in New England which commanded a wide view, a local friend pointed out two houses the owners of which he said still kept up something of the position of English squires, and were popularly called by that title. But such cases must certainly be exceptional. American life, as a rule, centres in the towns; indeed many Americans seem unable to understand any life which does not centre in a town. In my own case most people seemed to assume that I must live in London or in Oxford, or, as some, I know not wherefore, suggested, in Manchester. The idea that a man, at all events that a man who wrote books, could live in his own house among his own fields seemed altogether strange to them. It is not that there are no country-houses in America; very far from it; he who can afford it has both his country-house and his town-house. But he who cannot afford both has his town-house only, and with him who has both the country-house is quite subordinate to the town-house. The town-house is the real home; the country-house is merely the place for an occasional sojourn. A rich man, say at New York, who could afford to make, if he could not find ready made, the stateliest of parks and country-houses, prefers to build a grand house in a New York street, while his country-house is an altogether secondary matter. One need not stop to point out how different this is from the feelings of most men in England, whether of inherited or of acquired wealth. The one has already, the other buys or builds, his house

in the country. He doubtless has his town-house too; but it is his country-house which comes first and is really his home. The English gentleman is Mr. A. of such a place in the country, who most likely has his house in London also. The American gentleman is Mr. B. of such a city, who most likely has his house in the country also.

In this matter of town and country, the vast extent of the United States combines with their political constitution to cause another difference between England and America. In England we have only one centre, that wonderful something—for a city we cannot call it in its aggregate—which is at once a political, a social, and a literary centre. London has lately been taught that, in a political sense, it is not England; but it none the less is, and it more and more thoroughly becomes, the one centre of England. Neither the Universities nor the great commercial cities—and there is now happily one English city which may claim both names—are centres in the same sense. Purely local centres, neither academical nor commercial, some of which still held their place a hundred years back, have, in that character, simply vanished. London keeps its old place, and it has taken the place of the local centres as well. But no one American city can, as things now stand, take the place which London holds in England. For no American city is at once the greatest city in the land and at the same time the seat of the national government. To make an American London, New York and Washington must be rolled into one. But New York and Washington rolled into one would not really make an American London. The size of the country, its federal constitution, would, either of them alone, be enough to hinder any one city from becoming the one real national centre, like a great European capital. No city can be a real national centre to people who live three thousand miles off. Even if it could be so for political purposes, it could not be so for social purposes. And under a federal system, where each State does for itself so large a part of what we should call national business, the central attraction is necessarily divided. If no place within the State can be all that a national capital is in an ordinary kingdom or commonwealth, so neither can any place out of the State. And when, as in many States, old and new, the State capital is not fixed in the greatest city of the State, the attraction is divided again. Philadelphia certainly remains the head of Pennsylvania in a sense in which Harrisburg is not. It remains the head of Pennsylvania in a sense in which we can hardly believe that even

York and Exeter ever were the centres of their several counties, in a sense in which they certainly have long ceased to be so. In England therefore there is but one centre; in America there are many. In England we may say that, setting aside London and a few towns of special character like Brighton, Bath, Cheltenham, no one lives in a town unless he has some business, official or professional, which makes him live there. In America, on the one hand, men live in towns who have no official or professional necessity to live in them, and on the other hand the professional and mercantile classes necessarily hold a higher comparative position in America than they do here. Every large town therefore becomes a social centre in a way in which it cannot be in England. New York has one kind of attraction, Washington has another; but people do not press to either in the way in which in England they press to London, and to London only. London is something different in kind from any other English town; New York is simply another American town on a greater scale. Washington again is something different in kind from any other American town; but then it has not enough of size or importance in other ways to make it a general centre. One sees this in the newspaper press. Owing to the multiplicity of centres, no American papers can hold exactly the same position as the great London papers. But it is clearly the New York papers which come nearest to it; the Washington papers one looks on as simply local, more local a good deal than those at Chicago.

Now it strikes me that, if the dominant life of a country is to be its town life, it is a great gain that there should be many centres of such life, and not one only. And in America there is no danger of its being otherwise. New York certainly takes a great deal upon itself; but the other great cities are quite able to hold their own against it. And we must also remember that, from one point of view, town life is, after all, not dominant in the United States. It is dominant in the point of view which chiefly strikes such a traveller as myself. He misses the country-houses, the manor-houses and parsonages, of his own land; his friends, old or new-made, are sure to be mainly in the cities. But he must not forget that, in American political life, the cities are by no means exclusively dominant. If America has few squires, she has plenty of yeomen, and those on a magnificent scale. If in one way the American cities count for far more than the English cities, if from one point of view America seems to be all town and no country, from another point of view, the country counts for far

more than it does in England. At any rate the real voice of its inhabitants counts for far more.

Now this predominance of town over country, so far as it exists, is one of the points in which America does not, as in so many others, cleave to an earlier form of English life. There undoubtedly was a time when the old towns of England—as distinguished from the great commercial centres, new or of new growth—counted socially for more than they do now. And yet, when this was so, London itself, from some points of view, also counted for more than it does now. But there never was, or well could be, a time when social and intellectual life in England had so many centres as it now has in America. Still, if America in this respect does not reproduce an older England, it has some likeness to the continent of Europe as distinguished from England. Even in France, and of course far more in Italy, the old local capitals still hold a place which we may safely say that no town in England but London ever held since there was any united England at all. We must remember that, if Paris is, in many points, in all the most obvious points, far more thoroughly the centre of France than London is the centre of England, there are other points, less obvious but not without importance, in which it is less so. For instance, we might almost say that no book is published out of London. Books are still published in the Universities, in the Irish and Scottish capitals; but those who publish them find it needful at least to have London agencies. Now France is not quite like Germany in this matter; still good books are published in other French cities besides Paris. So again I have known foreigners show a little amazement at hearing that it was now an unheard-of thing for an English nobleman or country gentleman to have his town-house in any town except London. I need not say what the use of Italy is in this matter; even in France, wherever any *noblesse* is left, the town-house in the old capital of the province is still not uncommon. And I have myself found German scholars, not less than American scholars, puzzled at my not living in a town; they seemed unable to conceive any one living in the country in any position between the *Junker* and the *Bauer*. In all this, if America has departed from the model of England, she has conformed much more to the model of the rest of the world. It is the insular branch of the English folk which is in this matter the peculiar people.

The great American cities, those which have taken the position

of which I have just been speaking as centres of life for large parts of the country, contrast remarkably with the smaller towns and villages. In this matter, as in so many others, whatever in America is not palpably new, is pretty sure to be genuinely old. A small American town or village—in some States the name ‘village’ is the legal description of what we should call a market-town—one that has not grown with the same speed as its greater neighbours, is apt to have a very old-world air indeed about it. I am not speaking of new and unfinished places in the more lately settled States, some of which have a very desolate look. I mean towns dating from the earlier days of settlement, but which have failed to advance with their neighbours, which in some cases have positively gone back. I remember very well the general effect of Bristol in Pennsylvania. If the younger Boston and the younger York have greatly outstripped their older namesakes, the younger Bristol has as distinctly lagged behind the old. It had once, I believe, a considerable trade, which is now swallowed up by Philadelphia. It stands on a good site above the Delaware, and it has altogether, as these older towns commonly have, a respectable, comfortable, and thoroughly old-world look. Places of this kind have somewhat the same air as those open towns or large villages which lie on what, in the days of coaches, was the main road between London and Oxford. I am not sure that the general impression of belonging to a past state of things is not stronger in the American than in the English examples. This feeling is perhaps strengthened by the contrast between these old towns and the extremely modern air of the great cities. And the constant use of wood in building houses, a use almost equally common in some parts of England, always gives an air of age. Let me speak of another place smaller than Bristol, one indeed which we should not call a town at all, but a large village of detached houses. This is Farmington in Connecticut. Here was a truly old-world place, and I was taken to see the oldest house in it. And it was a house which we should call old even in England, a respectable wooden house of the seventeenth century. It was just what a New England house should be, except that its grand old open fire-place was blocked up by some modern device or other. But, if the house was thus satisfactory, a turn of disappointment was caused by the discovery of the inhabitants. Not that I have anything to say against them; I doubt not that they are respectable and excellent people in their own way. Only their way was not the way that I came to look for. I came to see New England

Puritans, and I found Ould Ireland Papishes. And unluckily the fate of this house is a typical one. It is a grievous truth that not a few New England houses are left altogether empty, while not a few others are occupied by Celtic strangers. The only comfort is that New England has gone westward. Those whom we ought to find in the old homes have gone, like their forefathers, to win new conquests for that strong English folk which called into being on their new soil institutions older than those of the England which they left behind them. But the immediate feeling at the change which has come over New England is a grievous one. I had to seek my comfort in a lower range of the animal world. It was cheering to fall in with something of so old-world an air as a yoke of oxen, and oxen too that seemed to have something of a Pilgrim-fatherly cut about them. Indeed at such a moment, there was a measure of relief even in a most primitive kind of coach which took us back to the railroad. But, putting aside the intruders, both Farmington and Bristol are thoroughly old-world places. It is only by negative signs that the really modern date of an American town of this class gradually comes out. The general feeling of such a place is certainly older than that of an ordinary English market-town. But then the American place, though everything about it looks in a manner *old*, contains nothing that can be called *ancient*. The English town or village, on the other hand, will commonly contain objects which are ancient, and not simply old. It will commonly have a church, it is not unlikely to have one or more houses, which carry us back to days far older than the Pilgrim Fathers. That is of course supposing that the church has not been restored, or that it has been restored with some degree of mercy. I have seen old-fashioned wooden churches in America, for whose details of course there was nothing to say, but whose general effect was a good deal more venerable than that of an ancient English church on which a modern architect has been let loose to play his tricks.

Of the newer parts of the country I saw but little, and of the rural parts of the older States not much beyond what I saw in a visit to a very retired part of Virginia. Here at least we were 'remote from cities,' more remote certainly than in any part of England that I am used to. But the state of things there is, I fancy, very different from the newly occupied settlements. Much as the land has suffered from the civil war, a civilization of two hundred and fifty years standing is not altogether wiped out.

A Virginian farm-house differs a good deal either from an English country-house or from a house in New York ; but it is possible to live quite comfortably in it. The presence of an inferior race hinders much of the difficulty and discomfort which is found in the younger parts of the States. I heard of an English lady in Iowa who had to scrub her own floors ; there is no such hard necessity in Virginia. Life, to the visitor at least, is not exciting ; there seems to be little society, and a certain difficulty, which I never found in any other part of the world, of knowing what to do with one's time. It is a simple and uneventful way of living ; but the main essentials of civilization are not lacking. I had there some opportunities of seeing the negroes in a state more nearly approaching to that in which they were in past times than can be seen in the Northern cities. It struck me—but this is a kind of point on which every man does well to distrust his own necessarily partial observation—that the feelings of the two parts of the country towards the negro had in some sort changed places. Before the war, one always understood that the Northern people, while professing zeal for the freedom of the negroes, shrank from them personally, but that the Southern people, while anxious to keep them in bondage, felt no such personal shrinking. The feeling both ways was perfectly natural. To me at least the negro is repulsive ; but I can understand that he may be otherwise to those who have been used to him from their childhood. On the other hand, I can understand that, now that the negroes have been set free by the agency of the North against the will of the South, the one side may think it their duty to make the best that they can of their own work, while the other side may feel a very natural bitterness towards those whose freedom is a constant memorial of their defeat. I certainly heard people speak of the negro in a different tone in the two sections in the country. But, though one has heard of negro senators and representatives, the negro seems no nearer to social equality in New England than he is in Virginia or Missouri. In New England he is certainly more human ; he may perhaps be accepted as a man, but he is hardly a brother. I need hardly say that I never met a negro at any American gentleman's table, nor did I hear of any American gentleman who, in the phrase of the old scoffing question, ' liked his daughter to marry a nigger.' I did hear of one gentleman—I think at Washington—who had a single white man in his service, the others being negroes. But the white man, if he waited on his master, was waited on by his fellow-servants ; he dined at a table

by himself, while the inferior race served him. In the North the servants are largely Irish or other strangers; in the Virginian farm-house of which I am thinking, all, indoors and out, were black; what seemed strange to English notions, none of them slept in the house. And the broad distinction between the two races, as tending to wipe out distinctions between members of the same race, sometimes leads to odd consequences. If a white workman, for instance, has to be employed for the whole day, he must dine at the master's table; he will not eat and drink with coloured people. In religion again I marked a broad distinction in my Virginian sojourn. There was an Episcopal and a Presbyterian church, neither of them any great work of architecture, but respectable buildings according to rural American notions. Between these more sober places of worship the white population was divided; and there was a pleasing simplicity in the sight of carriages and horses left freely standing about while their owners attended the service. But the negroes had places of worship of their own, Methodist and Baptist, not 'steeple-houses' like those of their white neighbours, but huts hardly to be distinguished from their own cabins. At Baltimore I attended two negro churches of quite opposite persuasions. One was Methodist, a building of some size, closely packed with a zealous congregation. I could have wished that the congregation had been less zealous or less closely-packed; for I should have greatly liked to stay to the end, which I found utterly impossible on purely physical grounds. The praying, singing, preaching, was all of a kind which sounded very strange to me; but at least nothing could be more hearty. From this scene I turned to another, which I understood better, a negro Episcopal church, with tendencies to what is called an 'advanced ritual.' It was but a little flock that was gathered together; but the few that there were seemed just as zealous as their Methodist neighbours. And I thought I could understand that these two seemingly opposite kinds of worship might easily commend themselves to the same class of minds. In both there is a greater opportunity of joining 'lustily and with a good courage' than there is in some intermediate kinds of devotion.

Two things I failed to see which I had hoped to come across, if nowhere else, yet at least in Virginia and Missouri. I saw none of the beautiful quadroons that I had read of in books. At every stage I was told that I should see them further south; but I suppose that I never got far enough south for the purpose. Still I do not understand why they should not grow at Balti-

more or St. Louis, just as much as at New Orleans. I was disappointed too in seeing next to nothing of the *fauna* of the country. The 'coons and the 'possums I was told I should see, like the beautiful quadroons, further south; but I never got far enough south to see them either. In Virginia I had good opportunities of studying the manners and customs of the turkey buzzard, and that was about all. The turkey buzzard, it should be remembered, has nothing to do with a buzzard, and still less with a turkey; it is really a small species of vulture. Its power of sight must be wonderful. It is strange indeed to see the birds flocking together from all quarters to any spot where the carcass is. There they crowd together and enjoy their feast till they are disturbed—for they are easily frightened, and fly off at the approach of a man—or till they are so thoroughly gorged that they cannot fly off. They are so useful as scavengers that the law of the State commonly protects them. I do not know however whether the turkey buzzards have anywhere attained to the same rights as the fish-hawks in New Jersey, who seem to form a privileged order among all other animated creatures. There, if I have not been misled, the very tree on which a fish-hawk has once made its nest is sacred.

In this quiet Virginian life I said that the main elements of civilization were not lacking. But I must make one important exception. It is however an exception which has to be made in the case of more thickly inhabited parts of America, and even, in some sort, in the case of some of the greatest cities. I mean the utter absence of decent roads. In the part of Virginia in which I stayed, you literally see the roads, in the words of the famous rhyme, 'before they were made.' Neither Lee nor Grant seems to have thought it needful to follow the praiseworthy example of Marshal Wade. Walking, riding, driving, are all done under difficulties, over roads which have never been brought under the dominion of the art of Appius and MacAdam. The lack of good roads is a general feature wherever I have been. I do not say that I saw no good roads in America; but they are certainly exceptional. In many parts, as I before remarked, the railroad has come before the road. Even in the immediate neighbourhood of large towns, sometimes even in the streets of large towns themselves, the road is often simply a mass of mud. I do not mean merely such mud as in many parts of England we are used to after rain; I mean thick abiding mire, abiding at least for several months together. In newly settled places the street

often consists of a miry way in the middle, and a path of planks on each side. And the path of planks is often seen, even where things are in much better order than this. The great cities vary greatly in this matter, and New York is certainly not the best. The very first thing that struck me on the day after landing was the neglected and dirty state of many of the New York streets, a state of which an English market-town would certainly be ashamed. I ask why so great a city is not better looked after in so important a matter, and I am told that it is owing to the corrupt administration of the Irish. This may or may not be so; if it be so, it is surely another argument against Irish ascendancy. I was told also that the Americans are a long-suffering people, and I partly believe it. The tendency to stand still sometimes strangely contrasts with the tendency to go ahead. Take for instance the post-office. Nowhere is it so easy to post a letter as in an American town; there are street-boxes at almost every step. But to register a letter or to go through any of the other branches of postal business often calls for a long journey. I could not find out that there was more than one place in Philadelphia where a letter could be registered. If there is more than one—in a city greater than any English city except London—there certainly are wonderfully few.

Another strange lack in some of the greatest American cities is the want of any good system of hackney carriages at moderate fares. In this matter it is perfectly true that a dollar in America goes no further than a franc in Europe. It would certainly cost several dollars to go as far in New York as you can go in Rome for a single *lira*. Here at least England is not singular; it is a general question between the old world and the new. Simply to get from one part of an American city to another is an object for which every provision is made, and often made in a way which is a triumph of enterprise and ingenuity. The cars climbing the inclined plane at Cincinnati are truly amazing, and in the descent at evening the view of the city is striking in no slight degree. The upstairs railway at New York is far more pleasant to the stranger than the underground railway in London; and I was told that those through whose streets it goes, who might have been expected to dislike it, are reconciled to it by its bringing them more custom. But neither the tram-car nor the upstairs railway serves the exact purpose of taking you to a particular house, say, in the case which American hospitality makes a very common one, that of being asked out to dinner. Then you must

either walk all the way or part of the way, often at the risk of some mud, or else you must take a hired carriage at what to an European seems an unreasonable cost. At New York I was told that the Irish were at the bottom of this also, as of most other things which either natives or strangers complain of. But why should transplanted Englishmen, or transplanted Dutchmen either, bow down their necks to this Irish bondage?

The position and look of some of the American cities is very striking and stately. Cleveland by its lake, Cincinnati with the hills above its great river, St. Louis rising above its yet greater river, would hold no small place among the cities of the elder world. So would the federal capital as seen from the Potomac, if only the hideous unfinished monument could be got rid of. And it fills one with simple amazement to see the way in which a vast and stately city like Chicago has risen from its ashes. In that great city I could see or hear of nothing older than the fire, save a church-tower which showed the marks of fire at its angles, and a single detached wooden house of an antiquated type. This last suggested that Chicago before the fire was something widely different from Chicago after it. But on the whole the American city which struck me most was Albany. Rising grandly as it does on both sides of the noble Hudson, it suggested to me some of the ancient cities by the Loire. It has the advantage, rather rare in American cities but shared with Albany by the federal capital, of having one dominant building. The general look of the city carried me so completely into another part of the world that, if any one had come up and told me in French, old or new, that the new capitol was '*le château de Monseigneur le duc d'Albanie*,' I could almost have believed him. This state capitol at Albany—why cannot it have a more rational name, like the *state-house* at Boston?—finally settled, for me at least, a question which I had been turning over in my mind ever since I landed in America. This was, What ought to be the architecture of the United States? That is to say, What should be the architecture of an English people settled in a country in the latitude, though not always in the climate, of Italy? Should it be the Gothic of England or the Romanesque of Italy? There seemed much to be said on either side; my own mind was finally fixed by the teaching of experience, by seeing which style really flourished best on American soil. I found the modern churches, of various denominations, certainly better than I had expected. They may quite stand beside the average of modern churches in England, setting aside

a few of the very best. All persuasions have a great love of spires, and, if the details are not always what one could wish, the general effect of the spires is often very stately, and they help largely towards the general appearance of the cities in a distant view. But I thought the churches, whose style is most commonly Gothic of one kind or another, decidedly less successful than some of the civil buildings. In some of these, I hardly know how far by choice, how far by happy accident, a style has been hit upon which seemed to me far more at home than any of the reproductions of Gothic. Much of the street architecture of several cities has very successfully caught the leading idea of the true Italian style, the style of Pisa and Lucca, the style of the simple round arch and column, uncorrupted by the vagaries either of the Italian sham Gothic or of the so-called *Renaissance*. In a large part of the Broadway of New York the main lines of the style—I speak only of the main lines, without committing myself either to details or to material—seemed to be very happily reproduced. The general effect of many parts of that long street struck me as just what the main street of a great commercial city ought to be. And there are some buildings of the same kind in Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, though there they alternate with other buildings of a very strange kind, whose odd fancies make us turn back to look with real satisfaction on the honest brick of Independence Hall. Some of the banks especially seem to have thought that the stumpier they made their columns the safer would be their deposits. But it was the capitol at Albany which fully convinced me that the true style for America was the style of Pisa and Lucca. The building has a most successful outline; in its details it is a strange mixture of styles, not so much confounded together as used side by side. There are parts which I cannot at all admire; but there are other parts, those in which the column and round arch are employed, which certainly pleased me as much as any modern building that I have seen for a long time. When I say that the arches of the senate-chamber seemed to me, as far as their general conception goes, worthy to stand at Ragusa, some will understand that I can say no more.

I am almost afraid to add that I thought that some parts of the inside of the City Hall at New York were entitled to some measure of the same praise. For I found it hardly safe to speak of that building. Its name at once drew forth bursts of indignation at the millions of dollars which certain persons had contrived to gain for themselves out of its making. Politically I

felt abashed, as if I had somehow become a champion of corruption. Still I could not help thinking that the columns and arches, of which alone I was speaking, were as guiltless of any offence as Sir Thomas More's beard. So, to come back to the capitol at Albany, I ventured to make the very smallest kind of artistic criticism on some chandeliers in the corridors which seemed to me too big, as hiding some of the architectural features. My remark did not call forth any artistic defence of the chandeliers; but I was much struck at the remark which it did call forth. Some one or other, I was answered, must have had some corrupt object in making them too big. It is certainly odd that one cannot make the most purely artistic criticism, either for or against anything, without calling up thoughts which have very little to do with artistic matters. Certainly I should be sorry to think that the architectural forms of which I speak carry with them any necessary taint of political corruption. For in these round-arched buildings I see a good hope for a real national American style. The thing seems to have come of itself; and the prospect is all the more hopeful if it has. I should be better pleased to think that the forms which pleased me when my eyes were fresh from Ragusa and Spalato were the work of men who had no thought of Ragusa and Spalato before their eyes.

I must leap from buildings to newspapers. And in the matter of newspapers I wish chiefly to speak of interviewers. I had the honour of having a good many things said of me in American papers, some friendly, some unfriendly, some neutral. And I might also say that some of the things that were said were perfectly true, some utterly false, while some had that mixed character, where imaginary details gather round a certain kernel of fact, which I conceive to be the true notion of a myth. It felt odd at first to have one's looks and one's clothes described and criticized in print; but one gets used to it as to other things. And if some disapproved of my trowsers and some of my 'accent,' it made up for it to find myself described elsewhere as 'a man of might, used to move whole continents.' I had certainly not rated my own powers of mind or body at anything like that measure; but a vanity which I trust was harmless could not but be pleased at finding that there were those who thought me capable of such great deeds. Now one is used to have odd things, though perhaps not quite so odd as this, said of one in the newspapers of our own land. But the interviewer, the man who asks you questions simply

in order to print your answers in a newspaper, is, as far as my experience goes, purely American. To be sure I was interviewed before I left England, and that by a fellow-Britisher; but then he was in the employ of a New York paper, and his portrait of me appeared at New York as soon as I landed. After I reached America I was interviewed a good many times. The process is not always pleasant; for the questioning consists largely in asking for one's impressions on various American matters, and specially on points of likeness and unlikeness between America and England. It is certainly odd that, when so many American papers are always assuring the world that they do not care for British opinion, they should still be so untiringly anxious to find out what British opinion is. And the questioning on these points sometimes puts one in an unfair dilemma. If one blames anything, one of course runs an obvious chance of giving offence. And if one praises anything one runs the chance of giving offence on the subtler ground of being thought 'condescending' and 'patronizing.' One subject on which the interviewers were very anxious to get something out of me was Ireland. On that subject I had my own reasons for keeping strict silence. I was also asked a good many questions about myself, and I seemed to arouse a good deal of amazement whenever I had to explain that I was not a professor and that I did not live in a town. I fancy too that I sank a good deal in the opinions of some of my questioners when I had to tell them that I knew nothing about Mr. Oscar Wilde, whose name was then to be seen in large letters on the walls, as his photographs, in various attitudes, were to be seen in the windows, at Washington and at several other places. It was too true that I had never heard of Mr. Wilde till I took up his poems in the house of a gentleman in Massachusetts. I afterwards learned more about him from a lady at Washington, who showed me a poem of Mr. Wilde's which won the Newdigate prize at Oxford. The subject was Ravenna, and in it one half-line was given to Theodoric. But I was sometimes pressed on much more amazing subjects. An interviewer at Cincinnati seemed to think himself wronged because I could tell him nothing whatever in answer to what seemed to me the very strange question, 'Do you think there is most drunkenness on Sunday afternoons in English or in American cities?' An interviewer further west represented me as saying that, the further west I went, the *better* I found the newspapers. I had not ventured on any such invidious comparison. I had kept myself to what I thought the safe and undeniable remark that the Western papers were *bigger* than the

Eastern. On the whole I got used to the interviewers, and I was specially charmed with the moral portrait of me which was given by one of them at St. Louis. From him I learned that, when I don't know a thing, I say that I don't know it, and that, when I do know a thing, I speak as if I were quite certain about it. To the interviewer, as I gathered from his report, this way of acting seemed a little strange, though he clearly approved of the eccentricity. To my own mind the puzzle would be why any man should either pretend to know a thing which he does not know or pretend not to know a thing which he does know.

On more strictly historical and political matters I have spoken elsewhere. And specially I have, in one shape or another, said all that I have to say as to the relations between three lands of the English people, in the European mainland, in the European island, and in the American mainland. On this head I will say only one word as to one common misconception. Since I have made it somewhat of my business to set forth the essential oneness of the two great branches of the English people, I have been met, sometimes in friendly, sometimes in unfriendly, guise, by hints that I have forgotten the great influx of strangers, Germans and Scandinavians for instance, into the United States, which is supposed to have caused a real difference of race between the English in Britain and the English in America. I have certainly not forgotten a very obvious fact, one which I have often insisted on, and which, when really understood, tells my way. Those who argue in this way forget that the phenomena of England and America are in this matter really the same. Since the settlement of the American colonies, foreign settlement in England, chiefly German and French, though certainly much smaller than in America, is quite large enough to be perceptible. But in both cases the dominant English element asserts its supremacy by assimilating the stranger. Whether in Britain or in America, the German or other foreigner becomes English; the Englishman never becomes German. I must here repeat some simple truths. Strict purity of blood is not to be found in any nation, and the greater part a nation plays in the history of the world, the further it is sure to be from any such purity. But in most nations there is some one element which is more than an element. There is something which is in truth the essence of the nation, the kernel round which all other elements grow, that which attracts and assimilates them all to itself. Alike in Britain and in the United

States, the part of this dominant and assimilating element is played by the English stock which settled in the one land in the fifth century, in the other in the seventeenth. I am fully aware that there are parts of the United States where more German is heard than English. But there is no part of the United States where English has been supplanted by German. When any State exchanges the English speech and law for the speech and law of some other people, then I shall allow that the people of the United States are a mixed race in the sense which is intended. Till then I shall hold them to be an English people which has adopted and assimilated—just as the English of Britain have done on a somewhat smaller scale—a large infusion of strangers. Into minuter questions as to the nature of assimilation, its comparative speed and the like under different sets of circumstances, I will not now enter.

The strength of the English stock in the United States is nowhere more clearly shown than in the fact that it not only assimilates all foreign elements in those lands which were colonies of England or colonies of such colonies, but that it makes itself dominant in lands which were never settled from England, but which were settled from other European lands. The short history of New Sweden, the longer history of New Netherland, shows us the way in which one body of Teutonic settlers gave way to another, and how the various kindred elements have been fused together, but not without leaving signs of earlier diversity. In some parts of New York city indeed the Low-Dutch stock, whether of Holland or of England, does seem to be overshadowed by that High-Dutch infusion which sometimes veils the Hebrew. But at Albany the influence of Holland and Zealand is perfectly visible, and at Schenectady one might almost think that their High Mightinesses still ruled on both sides of the Ocean. But the lands north-west of the Ohio, above all, the lands west of the Mississippi, have a yet more special history of their own. In the one we find a land won by Englishmen in warfare, when the colonies of England still were provinces, from the grasp of earlier colonists from France. In the other we find a land which never was an English colony—save in the sense in which the colonies of colonies may bear that name—which never was a possession of the British crown, which had no part or lot in the struggle which gave the colonies of England independence, a land to whose people Washington and the elder Adams were men of a foreign tongue, chiefs of a foreign nation—a land which became part of the soil of the new English-speaking folk, neither by warfare against the

elder England nor by settlement from the elder England, but by bargain and sale in the days of the third President. In the State of Missouri, in the city of St. Louis—of the southern Louisiana which keeps its old name I cannot speak—the name of the city at once tells its history; and, if we look a little deeper, we soon find signs which tell us that we are in a land which once was French. Yet this land is now practically English, in the sense in which the rest of the United States are English; and in the wake of settlers of English speech has come the usual following of strangers, both of kindred and of foreign blood. The elder French stock is not driven out, but it is hidden till we specially search for it. Now here we have at once a striking parallel and a striking contrast to some of the lands of the most famous European Confederation. As the once Romance lands of America revere the real Washington, who certainly did nothing for them, so the still Romance lands of Switzerland revere the mythical Tell, who may, at least in a figure, be said to have done something against them. Not only are the legendary heroes of the Three Lands revered on the neutral ground of Vaud and Geneva, they are revered in Ticino itself, where the men who were so zealous for freedom on their own soil showed themselves only as the harshest of taskmasters. The contrast lies in this: the Romance lands of Switzerland are Romance still; the Romance lands of America have ceased to be Romance. The real and mythical heroes of the elder Switzerland assuredly did nothing either for the land or the men of the Burgundian and Italian cantons; but the real heroes of the elder states of the American Union, if they did nothing for the lands of Missouri and Louisiana, assuredly did much for the forefathers of the great mass of the present inhabitants of those lands. Here are instances in which the local history of the American States connects itself, sometimes merely by analogy, sometimes by direct cause and effect, with European history, and sometimes with the oldest European history. In a land where everything at first sight seems to be of yesterday, we soon come to learn that the past, even the very remote past, has struck its roots very deep indeed.

So, as it seems to me, it is all things small and great. The one main conviction which I have carried away from my American sojourn is that, while some things in the United States are palpably of yesterday, yet, whenever a thing is not palpably of yesterday, the chances are that it is older than the thing which answers to it on our own side of the Ocean.

EDWARD A. FREEMAN.

Fraudulent Guests.

AMONG persons of mature years and judgment guests are few, though not necessarily infrequent. They have discovered by bitter experience that ninety-hundredths of the human race are not worth meeting at the convivial board at all; and of the tenth that remains, that only one at most is worth meeting twice. Even folks of a high degree of intelligence may occasionally be induced to dine out with a dull man; but they are not so foolish as to ask him to their own tables on that account. That notion of 'a return' of hospitality, where the agreeableness is all on one side, is only fit for the public-house, where, when one has won a shilling game at bagatelle, it is thought a point of honour to give his adversary his 'revenge.' For my part, I cannot imagine why elderly gentlemen who have wits of their own and do not absolutely live on them (in which case the mere food may be an object) go to so-called 'dinner-parties' at all—that is, to parties which are made up, like the atheist's world, 'without a plan.' They are almost always tempted, quite as much from sheer *ennui* as from anything attractive in the viands, to eat and drink too much. They are bored to distraction, often without even the mitigation of tobacco; and they are kept up too late at night.

The older we grow, the more fastidious as a rule we become socially. We like the friends we can count upon—who are 'as easy as an old shoe' with us; but we shrink from the new ones, especially, I need not say, from any that give the least suggestion of patent leather. There are those for whom the companionship of persons of title makes amends for anything; but I am speaking of a class who have over-lived such illusions and made up their minds, during the span left them in this world, to be comfortable.

Old friends, or, if new ones, nice ones; intelligent society with a humorous bent in it; the most perfect freedom of thought and speech: these alone to mature persons make social life worth living; all the rest is strained, pretentious, and uncomfortable.

As a very young man I once sought an introduction to a well-known woman of letters in London. She is not now of much im-

portance, being dead and forgotten ; but all literary persons had then an attraction for me (as indeed they have now), and I expressed a wish through a common friend to know her. 'My dear fellow,' he wrote, after making his application, 'she will have nothing to do with you. She says she knows a great deal too many people already.' At the time I thought this rather rude, but I have long learnt to envy that lady's moral courage. How delightful it would be, if one dared, to have that noble truth printed on one's card, and when new folks call upon us whom one does not want to know, to return them *this* by post :—

'Mr. So and So's compliments, but he knows a great deal too many people already'!

But, however many fellow-creatures he knows, and is obliged to know, the wise man, 'when he declineth' (a phrase which I have often thought may refer not only to his years but to his reluctance to accept 'scratch' invitations), will have but few guests, since next to dining by himself, which in a man of social parts is a wicked waste, he resents dining with ordinary people. His guests, like the wines of the merchant, are 'carefully selected' and of 'the best growths ;' some are 'still,' some are 'sparkling,' but they are all 'sound.' There is not a headache in a hog'shead of them, far less a heartache. Though full of raillery, not one of them will wound another's feelings ; there is sparring, but with the gloves ; there is fencing, but with the button on the foil. Politics are forbidden. To discourse on the principles of art is not forbidden, for the same reason that parricide was not prohibited by the laws of Draco : such an outrage has never been contemplated. Wine, as wine, and especially with reference to its cost, is, as a topic of talk, forbidden ; any allusion to the British aristocracy, unless it be an historical one, is absolutely forbidden. Otherwise thought and tongue are free. Such guests, for my part, I would have every day, could I afford it.

I shrink from saying one syllable against such good fellows in the public ear ; but even in these choice spirits there is something occasionally amiss, which, though in a manner born of their very excellence, demands reproof and remedy. Even the simplest of pretty village maidens is 'pleased to find herself so fair ;' and these excellent persons, though honest as the dawn, are not unaware of their own and each other's attractions. They therefore herd together a good deal. This, of itself, from the host's point of view, is inconvenient ; they tell one another stories which they afterwards dare not repeat in company, from very

shame. Let me not be misunderstood. There is nothing wrong in them ; but, having already been confided to one member of the party, they cannot with decency be retold in his presence. This, however, is but a general disadvantage arising from the circumstances of the case. The social crime I have to complain of is when this drawback is made particular, and two or more persons engaged to the same dinner-table in the evening, meet of malice prepense beforehand—say at lunch—and exhaust their several topics. I look upon this as not only unhandsome, but dishonest. They are no longer guests at all, in any true sense of the term ; they are squeezed oranges, empty champagne bottles, paper bags that have been blown out and burst, and have no more pop in them to amuse anybody.

Of course they are conscious of the infamy of such conduct, and would not reveal it if they could help it ; but they cannot conceal it. Brown and Jones did me the honour—I cannot say the pleasure—to dine with me the other day. Brown is a bright little creature, called familiarly ‘ the Cork ; ’ full of his quips and cranks (though of devout belief and the most exemplary moral habits). Jones is a very noble lawyer, with such experiences of human life as, when told as they should be, and as he knows how to tell them, are worth all the fictions in the world ; both of them great acquisitions to any dinner-table, only—unfortunately—great friends. They did not arrive at my house together (mark that ! from the very first they did their best to conceal the evidence of their crime), and I had no suspicion of any previous collusion. Brown exclaimed, ‘ What, you here ? ’ in his genial way, when he met Jones ; and Jones in his impressive tones replied, ‘ Good heavens, Brown I do declare ! ’ These were the only observations that to my knowledge escaped them during the entire evening.

The reason of their unwonted silence was inexplicable to me. Brown is very abstemious and does not require any extraneous excitement, such as the enchantress Ayala, to set him going ; but this evening he was as mute as a fish ; Jones, who as usual drank like a fish, was equally tongue-tied. I ransacked my brain for an explanation of this phenomenon. There is a story told of a certain person still amongst us, whose information upon some topics was simply amazing. They were very various, and it was obvious his reading had not been confined to a few subjects ; yet on others, not more abstruse, he never opened his lips. After much close watching, and comparing of notes among his friends, it was found that the things he knew so thoroughly all began with the early

letters of the alphabet. He was, it turned out, superintending the commencement of an encyclopædia. This could not, however, be the meaning of the reticence of Brown or Jones, who, in the way of talking at least, were persons of genius, and certainly would not be deterred from the discussion of any topic from the trifling circumstance of their knowing nothing about it. Once, indeed, Brown began in his old lively manner—and stopped short: he had caught Jones's eye. Once Jones, in his fine rolling tones, got so far as 'That reminds me'—and stopped short: he had caught Brown's eye.

The two circumstances, taken together, revealed to a certain member of the company, a criminal judge keen to 'track suggestion to its inmost cell,' the secret of the guilty pair. He got up, and contrary to all precedent—for I need hardly say such things as after-dinner-speeches are never tolerated amongst us—he denounced them. I see him now—with the gold glasses he always uses in passing sentence of death, and behind which he has the faculty of shedding tears—the very embodiment of Justice!

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'there are two persons here who have outraged the laws of hospitality; it is not for our host to follow their example by reproving them; that painful duty must necessarily be undertaken by a fellow-guest, and I accept the odium and the burthen of it. They were invited here, like the rest of us, to take their share in conversation, to add their quota of entertainment to the general store; instead of which they have been dull as ditch-water, and dumb as a pair of dumb bells. They have come here as much on false pretences as a man who sits down to dinner at a coffee-house without a sixpence in his pocket to pay for it. Good Heavens, gentlemen! (here he wept), is our host a coffee-house keeper that he should be treated so? Even as they were eating their oysters and sipping their chablis I saw guilt—conscious guilt—depicted on their countenances. They avoided one another's glances—a sure sign of complicity in crime. Mark my words, gentlemen, *those men have met before to-day*—from what I know of Jones, probably at lunch—and have already said to one another everything they had to say. Not a story has the one to offer us, not a witticism has the other: they have exhausted themselves to the dregs. It is true that they are not utterly lost to shame; they have not ventured in this company to commence an observation with "As I was saying to Jones to-day," or "As I was saying to Brown;" they have not dared, I admit, to hand round at this table their *réchauffés*: they have preferred to keep

an infamous silence.' There was a great deal more of it, for when the judge is not sitting (that is, when he is on his legs) he is apt to forget his dignity and become a counsel again ; but I will only add his peroration. 'In conclusion,' he observed, 'and considering the circumstances under which these unhappy men have ventured to take their seats (which might just as well have been empty for any advantage their occupiers have conferred upon us) at this social board, I regard their conduct as little short of felonious ; they are "Fraudulent Guests."'

There are worse cases than this, however. The other day I came upon a dear old friend of mine, Robert Thompson, who lives in the country, walking in Regent Street with his brother John. The latter is a London man, with whom I guessed, and rightly, Robert was staying. John is a dull, uninteresting fellow, to whom, but for Robert's sake, I should never give myself the trouble of nodding ; but the 'ties of blood' which bound them together made my friend's brother (to that limited extent) *my* friend. Indeed as I found them together, and much desired Robert's company, I was so rash as to say, 'Come, both of you, and dine with me to-morrow ; now do !' 'With pleasure,' responded John promptly. He did not often get even a 'scratch' invitation of that sort, and clenched the matter at once. Robert, on the other hand, looked distressed. 'I am so very sorry,' he said (and so the dear fellow really was ; sorry for *me*) ; 'but the fact is I am pledged to be in Warwickshire to-morrow.' I wished John in Warwickshire also—at Coventry ; but I had to entertain him : a Fraudulent Guest, if ever there was one.

One more 'shocking example,' and I have done. Blathers, of our Club, is my detestation. He has only one idea in the world—pigeon-shooting—which, of course (and this is so far to his credit), is not his own. He belongs to the Gun Club, and knew the Claimant, who was one of its crack shots. That is absolutely all he has to talk about. I had never conceived of such a person as a guest even in a nightmare ; yet he became mine. Two intimate friends were to dine with me on a certain Saturday to talk over a pet scheme of ours, whereby 'an obvious void in theological literature' was to be supplied.' It has not been started even yet, so I will not particularise it ; but it was a very private and confidential affair. As one of them lived on the Continent, and the other at Caterham (where people are always writing to the papers to say the trains don't fit), it was a difficult job to bring them together ; but I had effected it. At the last moment I

remembered a certain regulation of our Club which had not been fulfilled, and looked in to remedy it. In the hall I found Blathers putting on his great-coat; with his cab at the door, previously (as I took for granted) to going down to Brighton, which he always enlivens by his presence from Saturday to Monday.

‘You are not dining here to-night?’ I said, in as airy a tone as a constitutional hesitation in my speech admitted of.

‘No,’ he said; ‘I’m off.’

So, thinking he would suit my purpose as well as another, I replied,

‘The fact is, my dear fellow, I’ve got a couple of friends, not members of the Club, dining with me to-night at seven; and if you will so far oblige me——’

‘Delighted!’ he interrupted; ‘proud to meet your friends. I’m only going as far as my gunsmith’s, in Bond Street. I’ll be here at seven sharp.’

He was gone in a moment, and was coming back again to dine with me! To think that a natural infirmity—a mere slowness in verbal delivery—should have brought about so frightful an infliction was enough to make one a pessimist for life. It is the rule of our Club, that when we have two friends to dine, we must secure the name of another member for the second; and what I was about to say to Blathers was, ‘Will you so far oblige me as to lend me your name?’ But as to borrowing *him*, I should as soon have thought of buying him. Nevertheless he came: the most fraudulent, surely, of all Fraudulent Guests.

JAMES PAYN.

The Lady's Walk.

A STORY OF THE SEEN AND UNSEEN.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

CHAPTER III.

MR. CAMPBELL was not to be moved. He was very anxious, angry, and ill at ease; but he refused to be influenced in any way by this strange communication. It would be some intrusive woman, he said; some busybody—there were many about—who, thinking she might escape being found out in that way, had thought it a grand opportunity of making mischief. He made me a great many apologies for his first hasty words. It was very ill-bred, he said; he was ashamed to think that he had let himself be so carried away; but he would hear nothing of the message itself. The household, however, was in so agitated a state that, after the brothers departed to their business on Monday, I made a pretext of a letter calling me to town, and arranged my departure for the same evening. Both Charlotte and her father evidently divined my motive, but neither attempted to detain me: indeed she, I thought, though it hurt my self-love to see it, looked forward with a little eagerness to my going. This however, explained itself in a way less humiliating when she seized the opportunity of our last walk together to beg me to ‘do something for her.’

‘Anything,’ I cried; ‘anything—whatever man can.’

‘I knew you would say so; that is why I have scarcely said I am sorry. I have not tried to stop you. Mr. Temple, I am not shutting my eyes to it, like my father. I am sure that, whoever it was that spoke to you, the warning was true. I want you to go to Colin,’ she said abruptly, after a momentary pause, ‘and let me know the truth.’

‘To Colin?’ I cried. ‘But you know how little acquainted we are. It was not he who invited me but—Charley——’

‘And I——. You don’t leave me out, I hope,’ she said,

with a faint smile; 'but what could make a better excuse than that you have been here? Mr. Temple, you will go when I ask you? Oh, I do more—I entreat you! Go, and let me know the truth.'

'Of course I shall go—from the moment you bid me, Miss Campbell,' I said. But the commission was not a pleasant one, save in so far that it was for her service.

We were walking up and down by the side of the water, which every moment grew more and more into a blazing mirror, a burnished shield decked with every imaginable colour, though our minds had no room for its beauty, and it only touched my eyesight in coming and going. And then she told me much about Colin which I had not known or guessed—about his inclinations and tastes, which were not like any of the others, and how his friends and his ways were unknown to them. 'But we have always hoped this would pass away,' she said, 'for his heart is good; oh, his heart is good! You remember how kind he was to me when we met you first. He is always kind.' Thus we walked and talked until I had seen a new side at once of her character and life. The home had seemed to me so happy and free from care; but the dark shadow was there as everywhere, and her heart often wrung with suspense and anguish. We then returned slowly towards the house, still absorbed in this conversation, for it was time that I should go in and eat my last meal at Ellermore.

We had come within sight of the door, which stood open as always, when we suddenly caught sight of Mr. Campbell posting towards us with a wild haste, so unlike his usual circumspect walk, that I was startled. His feet seemed to twist as they sped along, in such haste was he. His hat was pushed back on his head, his coat-tails flying behind him—precipitate like a man pursued, or in one of those panics which take away breath and sense, or, still more, perhaps as if a strong wind were behind him, blowing him on. When he came within speech of us, he called out hurriedly, 'Come here! come here, both of you!' and turning, hastened back with the same breathless hurry, beckoning with his hand. 'He must have heard something more,' Charlotte said, and rushed after him. I followed a few steps behind. Mr. Campbell said nothing to his daughter when she made up to him. He almost pushed her off when she put her hand through his arm. He had no leisure even for sympathy. He hurried along with feet that stumbled in sheer haste till he came to the Lady's Walk, which lay in the level sunshine, a path of gold between the great boles of the trees. It was a slight ascent, which tried

him still more. He went a few yards along the path, then stopped and looked round upon her and me, with his hand raised to call our attention. His face was perfectly colourless. Alarm and dismay were written on every line of it. Large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead. He seemed to desire to speak, but could not; then held up his finger to command our attention. For the first moment or two my attention was so concentrated upon the man and the singularity of his look and gesture, that I thought of nothing else. What did he want us to do? We stood all three in the red light, which seemed to send a flaming sword through us. There was a faint stir of wind among the branches overhead, and a twitter of birds; and in the great stillness the faint lap of the water upon the shore was audible, though the loch was at some distance. Great stillness—that was the word; there was nothing moving but these soft stirrings of nature. Ah! this was what it was! Charlotte grew perfectly pale, too, like her father, as she stood and listened. I seem to see them now: the old man with his white head, his ghastly face, the scared and awful look in his eyes, and she gazing at him, all her faculties involved in the act of listening, her very attitude and drapery listening too, her lips dropping apart, the life ebbing out of her, as if something was draining the blood from her heart.

Mr. Campbell's hand dropped. 'She's away,' he said. 'She's away'—in tones of despair; then, with a voice that was shaken by emotion—'I thought it was, maybe, my fault. By times you say I am getting stupid.' There was the most heartrending tone in this I ever heard—the pained humility of old age, confessing a defect, lit up with a gleam of feverish hope that in this case the defect might be a welcome explanation.

'Father, dear,' cried Charlotte, putting her hand on his arm—she had looked like fainting a moment before, but recovered herself—'It may be only a warning. It may not be desperate even now.'

All that the old man answered to this was a mere repetition, pathetic in its simplicity. 'She's away, she's away!' Then, after a full minute's pause, 'You mind when that happened last?' he said.

'Oh, father! oh, father!' cried Charlotte. I withdrew a step or two from this scene. What had I, a stranger, to do with it? They had forgotten my presence, and at the sound of my step they both looked up with a wild eager look in their faces, followed by blank disappointment. Then he sighed, and said, with a return of composure, 'You will throw a few things into a bag, and we'll go at once, Chatty. There is no time to lose.'

They went up with me to town that night. The journey has never seemed to me so long or so fatiguing, and Mr. Campbell's state, which for once Charlotte in her own suspense and anxiety did not specially remark, was distressing to see. It became clear afterwards that his illness must have been coming on for some time, and that he was not then at all in a condition to travel. He was so feeble and confused when we reached London that it was impossible for me to leave them, and I was thus, without any voluntary intrusion of mine, a witness of all the melancholy events that followed. I was present even at the awful scene which the reader probably will remember as having formed the subject of many a newspaper article at the time. Colin had 'gone wrong' in every way that a young man could do. He had compromised the very existence of the firm in business; he had summed up all his private errors by marrying a woman unfit to bear any respectable name. And when his father and sister suddenly appeared before him, the unfortunate young man seized a pistol which lay suspiciously ready to his hand, and in their very presence put an end to his life. All the horror and squalor and dismal tragedy of the scene is before me as I write. The wretched woman, whom (I felt sure) he could not endure the sight of in Charlotte's presence, the heap of letters on his table announcing ruin from every quarter, the consciousness so suddenly brought upon him that he had betrayed and destroyed all who were most dear to him, overthrew his reason or his self-command. And the effect of so dreadful an occurrence on the unhappy spectators needs no description of mine. The father, already wavering under the touch of paralysis, fell by the same blow, and I had myself to bring Charlotte from her brother dead to her father dying, or worse than dying, struck dumb and prostrate in that awful prison of all the faculties. Until Charley arrived I had everything to do for both dead and living, and there was no attempt to keep any secret from me, even had it been possible. It seemed at first that there must be a total collapse of the family altogether; but afterwards some points of consolation appeared. I was present at all their consultations. The question at last came to be whether the 'Works,' the origin of their wealth, should be given up, and the young men disperse to seek their fortune as they might, or whether a desperate attempt should be made to keep up the business by retrenching every expense and selling Ellermore. Charley, it was clear to me, was afraid to suggest this dreadful alternative to his sister; but she was no weakling to shrink from

any necessity. She made up her mind to the sacrifice without a moment's hesitation. 'There are so many of us—still,' she said; 'there are the boys to think of, and the children.' When I saw her standing thus, with all those hands clutching at her, holding to her, I had in my own mind a sensation of despair. But what was that to the purpose? Charlotte was conscious of no divided duty. She was ready to serve her own with every faculty, and shrank from no sacrifice for their sake.

It was some time before Mr. Campbell could be taken home. He got better indeed after a while, but was very weak. And happily for him he brought no consciousness of what had happened out of the temporary suspension of all his faculties. His hand and one side were almost without power, and his mind had fallen into a state which it would be cruel to call imbecility. It was more like the mind of a child recovering from an illness, pleased with, and exacting constant attention. Now and then he would ask the most heartrending questions: what had become of Colin, if he was ill, if he had gone home? 'The best place for him, the best place for him, Chatty,' he would repeat; 'and if you got him persuaded to marry, that would be fine.' All this Charlotte had to bear with a placid face, with quiet assent to the suggestion. He was in this condition when I took leave of him in the invalid carriage they had secured for the journey. He told me that he was glad to go home; that he would have left London some time before but for Chatty, who 'wanted to see a little of the place.' 'I am going to join my son Colin, who has gone home before us—isn't that so, Chatty?' 'Yes, father,' she said. 'Yes, yes, I have grown rather doited, and very very silly,'¹ the old man said, in a tone of extraordinary pathos. 'I am sometimes not sure of what I am saying; but Chatty keeps me right. Colin has gone on before; he has a grand head for business; he will soon set everything right—connected,' he added, with a curious sense which seemed to have outlived his other powers, that somehow explanation of Colin's actions was necessary—'connected with my retirement. I am past business; but we'll still hope to see you at Ellermore.'

I ought perhaps to say, though at the risk of ridicule, that up to the moment of their leaving London, I constantly met, or seemed to meet—for I became confused after a while, and felt incapable of distinguishing between feeling and fact—the same

¹ Used in Scotland in the sense of weakness of body-invalidism.

veiled lady who had spoken to me at Ellermore. Wherever there was a group of two or three people together, it appeared to me that she was one of them. I saw her in advance of me in the streets. I saw her behind me. She seemed to disappear in the distance wherever I moved. I suppose it was imagination—at least that is the most easy thing to say: but I was so convinced at the moment that it was not imagination, that I have hurried along many a street in pursuit of the phantom who always, I need not say, eluded me. I saw her at Colin's grave: but what need to linger longer on this hallucination, if it was one? From the day the Campbells left London, I saw her no more.

CHAPTER IV.

THEN there ensued a period of total stillness in my life. It seemed to me as if all interest had gone out of it. I resumed my old occupations, such as they were, and they were not very engrossing. I had enough, which is perhaps of all conditions of life, if the most comfortable, the least interesting. If it was a disciple of Solomon who desired that state, it must have been when he was like his master, *blasé*, and had discovered that both ambition and pleasure were vanity. There was little place or necessity for me in the world. I pleased myself, as people say. When I was tired of my solitary chambers, I went and paid visits. When I was tired of England, I went abroad. Nothing could be more agreeable, or more unutterably tedious, especially to one who had even accidentally come across and touched upon the real events and excitements of life. Needless to say that I thought of the household at Ellermore almost without intermission. Charlotte wrote to me now and then, and it sometimes seemed to me that I was the most callous wretch on earth, sitting there watching all they were doing, tracing every step and vicissitude of their trouble in my own assured well-being. It was monstrous, yet what could I do? But if, as I have said, such impatient desire to help were to come now and then to those who have the power to do so, is political economy so infallible that the world would not be the better for it? There was not a word of complaint in Charlotte's letters, but they made me rage over my impotence. She told me that all the arrangements were being completed for the sale of Ellermore, but that her father's condition was still such that they did not know how to communicate to him the impending change.

'He is still ignorant of all that has passed,' Charlotte wrote, 'and asks me the most heartrending questions; and I hope God will forgive me all that I am obliged to say to him. We are afraid to let him see anyone lest he should discover the truth; for indeed falsehood, even with a good meaning, is always its own punishment. Dr. Maxwell, who does not mind what he says when he thinks it is for his patient's good, is going to make believe to send him away for change of air; and this is the artifice we shall have to keep up all the rest of his life to account for not going back to Ellermore.' She wrote another time that there was every hope of being able to dispose of it by private bargain, and that in the meantime friends had been very kind, and the 'Works' were going on. There was not a word in the letter by which it would have been divined that to leave Ellermore was to the writer anything beyond a matter of necessity. She said not a word about her birthplace, the home of all her associations, the spot which I knew was so dear. There had been no hesitation, and there was no repining. Provided only that the poor old man, the stricken father, deprived at once of his home and firstborn, without knowing either, might be kept in that delusion—this was all the exemption Charlotte sought.

And I do not think they asked me to go to them before they left the place. It was my own doing. I could not keep away any longer. I said to Charlotte, and perhaps also to myself, by way of excuse, that I might help take care of Mr. Campbell during the removal. The fact was that I could not stay away from her any longer. I could have risked any intrusion, thrust myself in anyhow, for the mere sake of being near her and helping her in the most insignificant way.

It was, however, nearly Christmas before I yielded to my impatience. They were to leave Ellermore in a week or two. Mr. Campbell had been persuaded that one of the soft and sheltered spots where Scotch invalids are sent in Scotland would be better for him. Charlotte had written to me, with a half despair, of the difficulties of their removal. 'My heart almost fails me,' she said; and that was a great deal for her to say. After this I could hesitate no longer. She was afraid even of the revival of life that might take place when her father was brought out of his seclusion, of some injudicious old friend who could not be staved off, and who might talk to him about Colin. 'My heart almost fails me.' I went up to Scotland by the mail train that night, and next day, while it was still not much more than noon, found myself at Ellermore.

What a change! The heather had all died away from the hills; the sunbright loch was steely blue; the white threads of water down every crevice in the mountains were swollen to torrents. Here and there on the higher peaks there was a sprinkling of snow. The fir-trees were the only substantial things in the nearer landscape. The beeches stood about all bare and feathery, with every twig distinct against the blue. The sun was shining almost as brightly as in summer, and scattered a shimmer of reflections everywhere over the wet grass, and across the rivulets that were running in every little hollow. The house stood out amid all this light, amid the bare tracery of the trees, with its Scotch-French *tourelles*, and the sweep of emerald lawn, more green than ever, at its feet, and all the naked flower-beds; the blue smoke rising peacefully into the air, the door open as always. There was little stir or movement, however, in this wintry scene. The out-door life was checked. There was no son at home to leave traces of his presence. The lodge was shut up, and vacant. I concluded that the carriage had been given up, and all luxuries, and the coachman and his family were gone. But this was all the visible difference. I was received by one of the maids, with whose face I was familiar. There had never been any wealth of male attendants at Ellermore. She took me into the drawing-room, which was deserted, and bore a more formal look than of old. 'Miss Charlotte is mostly with her papa,' the woman said. 'He is very frail; but just wonderful contented, like a bairn. She's always up the stair with the old gentleman. It's no good for her. You'll find her white, white, sir, and no like hersel.' In a few minutes Charlotte came in. There was a gleam of pleasure (I hoped) on her face, but she was white, white, as the woman said, worn and pale. After the first greeting, which had brightened her, she broke down a little, and shed a few hasty tears, for which she excused herself, faltering that everything came back, but that she was glad, glad to see me! And then she added quickly, that I might not be wounded, 'It has come to that, that I can scarcely ever leave my father; and to keep up the deception is terrible.'

'You must not say deception.'

'Oh, it is nothing else; and that always punishes itself. It is just the terror of my life that some accident will happen; that he will find out everything at once.' Then she looked at me steadily, with a smile that was piteous to see, 'Mr. Temple, Ellermore is sold.'

'Is it so—is it so?' I said, with a sort of groan. I had still

thought that perhaps at the last moment something might occur to prevent the sacrifice.

She shook her head, not answering my words, but the expression of my face. 'There was nothing else to be desired,' she said; and, after a pause, 'We are to take him to the Bridge of Allan. He is almost pleased to go; he thinks of nothing further—oh, poor old man, poor old man! If only I had him there safe; but I am more terrified for the journey than I ever was for anything in my life.'

We talked of this for some time, and of all the arrangements she had made. Charley was to come to assist in removing his father; but I think that my presence somehow seemed to her an additional safeguard, of which she was glad. She did not stay more than half an hour with me. 'It will be dull, dull for you, Mr. Temple,' she said, with more of the lingering cadence of her national accent than I had perceived before—or perhaps it struck me more after these months of absence. 'There is nobody at home but the little ones, and they have grown far too wise for their age, because of the many things that they know must never be told to papa; but you know the place, and you will want to rest a little.' She put out her hand to me again—'And I am glad, glad to see you!' Nothing in my life ever made my heart swell like those simple words. That she should be 'glad, glad' was payment enough for anything I could do. But in the meantime there was nothing that I could do. I wandered about the silent place till I was tired, recalling a hundred pleasant recollections; even to me, a stranger, who a year ago had never seen Ellermore, it was hard to give it up; and as for those who had been born there, and their fathers before them, it seemed too much for the cruellest fate to ask. But Nature was as indifferent to the passing away of the human inhabitants, whose little spell of a few hundred years was as nothing in her long history, as she would have been to the falling of a rock on the hillside, or the wrenching up of a tree in the woods. For that matter, of so small account are men, the rock and tree would both have been older dwellers than the Campbells; and why for that should the sun moderate his shining, or the clear skies veil themselves?

My mind was so taken up by these thoughts that it was almost inadvertence that took me, in the course of my solitary rambles about, to the Lady's Walk. I had nearly got within the line of the beech-trees, however, when I was brought hurriedly back to the strange circumstances which had formed an accompani-

ment to this family history. To hear once more the footsteps of the guardian of Ellermore had a startling effect upon me. She had come back then! After that first thrill of instinctive emotion this gave me a singular pleasure. I stood between the trees and heard the soft step coming and going with absolute satisfaction. It seemed to me that they were not altogether abandoned so long as she was here. My heart rose in spite of myself. I began to speculate on the possibility even yet of saving the old house. I asked myself how it could be finally disposed of without Mr. Campbell's consent and signature; and tried to believe that at the last moment some way might open, some wonderful windfall come. But when I turned back to the house, this fantastic confidence naturally failed me. I began to contemplate the other side of the question—the new people who would come in. Perhaps 'some Englishman,' as Charley had said with a certain scorn; some rich man, who would buy the moors and lochs at many times their actual value, and bring down, perhaps, a horde of Cockney sportsmen to banish all quiet and poetry from Ellermore. I thought with a mingled pity and anger of what the Lady would do in such hands. Would she still haunt her favourite walk when all whom she loved were gone? Would she stay there in forlorn faithfulness to the soil, or would she go with her banished race? or would she depart altogether, and cut the tie that had bound her to earth? I thought—for fancy once set out goes far without any conscious control from the mind—that these were circumstances in which the intruders into the home of the Campbells might be frightened by noises and apparitions, and all those vulgarer powers of the unseen of which we hear sometimes. If the Lady of Ellermore would condescend to use such instruments, no doubt she might find lower and less elevated spirits in the unseen to whom this kind of play would be congenial. I caught myself up sharply in this wandering of thought, as if I were forming ideas derogatory to a dear friend, and felt myself redden with shame. She connect her lovely being with tricks of this kind! I was angry with myself, as if I had allowed it to be suggested that Charlotte would do so. My heart grew full as I pursued these thoughts. Was it possible that some mysterious bond of a kind beyond our knowledge connected her with this beloved soil? I was overawed by the thought of what she might suffer, going upon her solitary watch, to see the house filled with an alien family—yet, perhaps, by-and-by, taking them into amity, watching over them as she had done over her own, in that sweetness of self-restraint and

tender love of humankind which is the atmosphere of the blessed. All through this spiritual being was to me a beatified shadow of Charlotte. You will say all this was very fantastic, and I do not deny that the sentence is just.

Next day passed in something the same way. Charlotte was very anxious. She had wished the removal to take place that afternoon, but when the moment came she postponed it. She said 'To-morrow,' with a shiver. 'I don't know what I am afraid of,' she said, 'but my heart fails me—my heart fails me.' I had to telegraph to Charley that it was deferred: and another long day went by. It rained, and that was an obstacle. 'I cannot take him away in bad weather,' she said. She came downstairs to me a dozen times a day, wringing her hands. 'I have no resolution,' she cried. 'I cannot—I cannot make up my mind to it. I feel that something dreadful is going to happen.' I could only take her trembling hand and try to comfort her. I made her come out with me to get a little air in the afternoon. 'You are killing yourself,' I said. 'It is this that makes you so nervous and unlike yourself.' She consented, though it was against her will. A woman who had been all her life in their service, who was to go with them, whom Charlotte treated, as she said, 'like one of ourselves,' had charge of Mr. Campbell in the meantime. And I think Charlotte got a little pleasure from this unusual freedom. She was very tremulous, as if she had almost forgotten how to walk, and leant upon my arm in a way which was very sweet to me. No word of love had ever passed between us; and she did not love me, save as she loved Charley and Harry, and the rest. I think I had a place among them, at the end of the brothers. But yet she had an instinctive knowledge of my heart; and she knew that to lean upon me, to show that she needed me, was the way to please me most. We wandered about there for a time in a sort of forlorn happiness; then, with a mutual impulse, took our way to the Lady's Walk. We stood there together, listening to the steps. 'Do you hear them?' said Charlotte, her face lighting up with a smile. 'Dear lady! that has always been here since ever I mind!' She spoke as the children spoke in the utter abandonment of her being, as if returning for refreshment to the full simplicity of accent and idiom, the soft native speech to which she was born. 'Will she stay after us, do ye think?' Charlotte said; and then, with a little start, clinging to my arm, 'Was that a sound—was that a cry?'

Not a cry, but a sigh. It seemed to wander over all the

woods and thrill among the trees. You will say it was only the wind. I cannot tell. To me it was a sigh, personal, heart-rending. And you may suppose what it was to her. The tears dropped from her full eyes. She said, speaking to the air, 'We are parting, you and me. Oh, go you back to Heaven, and let us trouble you no more. Oh, go back to your home, my bonnie lady, and let us trouble you no more!'

'Charlotte!' I cried, drawing her arm more closely through mine. She cast me a glance, a smile, like one who could not even in the midst of the highest thoughts neglect or be unkind, but drew her hand away and clasped it in the other. 'We are of one stock,' she said, the tears always falling; 'and the same heart. We are too anxious, but God is above us all. Go back to your pleasant place, and say to my mother that I will never leave them. Go away, my bonnie lady, go away! You and me, we must learn to trust them to God.'

We waited, and I think she almost expected some reply. But there was none. I took her arm within mine again, and led her away trembling. The moment, the excitement had been too much for me also. I said, 'You tell her to go, that she is too anxious, that she must trust you to God—and in the same breath you pledge yourself never to leave them. Do you think if God does not want her, He wants you to stand between Him and them?' I grasped her arm so closely and held it so to my side in my passion that I think I almost hurt her. She gave me a startled look, and put up her hand to dry her wet eyes.

'It is very different,' she said; 'I am living and can work for them. It has come to me all in a moment to see that She is just like me after all. Perhaps to die does not make a woman wise any more than life does. And it may be that nobody has had the thought to tell her. She will have imagined that she could stop any harm that was coming, being here; but if it was not God's pleasure to stop it, how could she? You know she tried,' said Charlotte, looking at me wistfully; 'she tried—God bless her for that! Oh, you know how anxious she was; but neither she nor I could do it—neither she nor I!'

At this moment we were interrupted by some one flying towards us from the house, calling, 'Miss Charlotte, Miss Charlotte! you are wanted,' in a wild and agitated tone. It was the woman who had been left in charge of Mr. Campbell, and Charlotte started at the sight of her. She drew her hand from my arm, and flew along the path. 'Oh, Marg'ret, why did you leave him?' she said.

'It was no blame of mine,' said the woman, turning, following her mistress. I hurried on, too, after them, and the explanation was addressed to both of us. 'He would come down to the library: nothing would stop him. I tried all I could; but what could I do? And there is nothing to be frightened for, Miss Charlotte. Ah! I've nae breath to tell it. He is just real like himself!'

Charlotte flew along the path like a creature flying for life. She paused an instant at the door of the house to beckon me to follow her. The library, the room where her father had gone, was one of those which had been partially dismantled. The pictures had been taken down from the walls, a number of books which she meant to take with her collected on the tables. Mr. Campbell had displaced some of the books in order to seat himself in his favourite seat. He looked at her curiously, almost with severity, as she came in anxious and breathless. He was greatly changed. He had been robust and hale, like a tower, when I first entered Ellermore, not yet six months since. Now he had shrunken away into half his size. The coat which he had not worn for months hung loosely upon him; his white hair was long, and he wore a beard which changed his appearance greatly. All this change had come since the time I parted with him in London, when he told me he was going to join his son Colin; but there was another change more remarkable, which I with awe, and Charlotte with terror, recognised at a glance—the prostration of his mind was gone. He looked his daughter in the face with intelligent, almost sternly intelligent eyes.

'Oh, father, you have wanted me!' Charlotte cried. 'I went out for a mouthful of air—I went out—for a few minutes——'

'Why should you not have gone out, Chatty?' he said. 'And why was Marg'ret left in charge of me? I have been ill, I make no doubt; but why should I be watched and spied about my own house?'

She gave me a glance of dismay, and then she faltered, 'Oh, not that, father—not that!'

'But I tell you it was that. She would have hindered my coming downstairs, that woman'—he gave a little laugh, which was terrible to us in the state of our feelings—'and here are you rushing in out of breath, as if there was some cause of fear. Who's that behind ye? Is it one of your brothers—or——'

'It is Mr. Temple, father,' she said, with a new alarm.

'Mr. Temple,' he said, with a shade of displeasure passing over his face. Then he recovered himself, and his old-world

politeness. 'I am glad to see ye,' he said. 'So far as I can remember, the house was much disorganised when you were here before, Mr. Temple. You will think we are always out of order; but I've been ill, and everything has fallen out of gear. This is not a place,' he added, turning to Charlotte, 'to receive a stranger in. What is all this for?' he added, in a sharp tone, waving his hand towards the books, of which some were heaped at his feet on the floor.

Once more she made a pause of dismay. 'They are some books to take with us,' she said; 'you remember, father, we are going away.'

'Going away!' he cried, irritably. 'Where are my letters? Where are your brothers? What are you doing with a gentleman visitor (I beg ye a thousand pardons, Mr. Temple!) and the place in such a state? It is my opinion that there is something wrong. Where are my letters? It is not in reason that there should be no letters. After being laid aside from business for a time, to have your letters kept back from you, you will allow, Mr. Temple,' he said, turning to me with an explanatory air, 'is irritating. It is perhaps done with a mistaken notion that I am not equal to them; but if you think I will allow myself to be treated as a child——'

He stammered a little now and then, in his anger, but made a great effort to control himself. And then he looked up at us, once more a little severely, and brought confusion to all our hopes with one simple question. 'Where is Colin?' he said.

What could be more natural? Charlotte gave me one look, and stood, white as death, motionless, her fingers twisting together. How truly she had said that falsehood was its own punishment, even such falsehood as this! She had answered him with ambiguous words when he was in the state of feebleness from which he had thus awoke, and he had been easily satisfied and diverted from too close inquiry. But now she was confounded by the sudden question. She could not confront with a subterfuge her father's serious eyes; her head drooped, her hands caught at each other with a pitiful clasp, while he sat looking at her with an authoritative, but as yet unalarmed, look. All this time the door had been left ajar, and Marg'ret stood waiting outside, listening to all that went on, too much interested and anxious to feel herself out of place. But when she heard this demand the woman was struck with horror. She made a step within the door. 'Oh, Ellermore!' she cried. 'Oh! my auld maister, dinna break her heart

and mine! To hear ye asking for Colin! and Colin in his grave this four long months, poor lad, poor lad!’ She threw her apron over her head as she spoke, and burst forth into loud sobs and tears. Charlotte had put out a hand to stop the revelation, but dropped it again, and stood by speechless, her head bent, and wringing her hands, a silent image of grief and guilt, as if it had been her from whom the blow came.

The old man sat and listened with a countenance growing ashy pale, and with intent eyes, that seemed to flicker as if beyond his control. He tried to speak, but in the trembling of his lips could articulate nothing. Then he slowly raised himself up and stood pallid and dizzy, like a man on the edge of a precipice.

‘My son is dead, and I knew it not,’ he said slowly, pausing between the words. He stood with his trembling lips falling apart, his countenance all moving and twitching, transfixed, it seemed, by a sort of woeful amaze, wondering at himself. Then he turned upon Charlotte, with a piteous appeal. ‘Was I told, and have I forgotten?’ he asked. The humiliation of that thought overpowered his re-awakened soul.

She came to him quickly and put her arm round him. ‘Father, dear, you were so ill, they would not let us [tell you. Oh, I have known, I have known it would be so much the worse when it came!’

He put her away from him, and sat down again feebly in his chair. In that dreadful moment he wanted no one. The horror of the individual humiliation, the idea that he could have heard and forgotten, was more terrible even than the dreadful news which thus burst upon him. ‘I’m glad,’ he said, ‘I’m glad,’ babbling with his loose lips. I shrank away, feeling it a profanation to be here, a spectator of the last mystery of nature; but Charlotte made a faint motion that kept me from withdrawing altogether. For the first time she was afraid; her heart had failed her.

For some minutes her father continued silent in his chair. The sunset had faded away, the misty twilight was falling. Marg’ret, guilty and miserable, but still unable altogether to subdue her sobs, throwing her white apron from her head, and looking round with a deprecating, apologetic glance, had withdrawn to the other side of the room. All was silence after that broken interchange of words. He lay back, clasping and unclasping his hands, his lips and features all moving, whether with a wish to speak or with the mere workings of emotions unspeakable, I cannot tell. When

suddenly, all at once, with the voice of a strong man loud and full, he broke out into the cry which has sounded through all the world—the utterance of every father's anguish. 'Oh, Absalom, my son, my son! Would God that I had died for thee, my son, my son——'

We both rushed towards him simultaneously. He did not remark me, fortunately; but again he put Charlotte away. 'What are you afraid for?' he said, almost sternly; 'that I will fall back and be ill again? That is not possible. Ye think sorrow kills; but no, it stings ye back to life: it stings ye back to life,' he repeated, raising himself in his chair. Then he looked round him solemnly. 'Marg'ret, my woman, come here, and give me your hand. We're partners in trouble, you and me, and never shall we part. As long as this is my house there is a place in it for you. Afterwards, when it goes to——ah! when it goes to Charley,' he cried, with a sudden burst of unforeseen sobs.

Charlotte looked at me again. Her face was white with despair. How was this last news to be broken to him?

'Father,' she said, standing behind him, 'you are sorely tried. Will you not come back to your room and rest till to-morrow, and then you will hear all? Then we will tell you—about all that has happened——'

Her voice shook like a leaf in the wind, but she managed to show no other sign of her terror and despair. There was a long pause after this, and we stood waiting, not knowing how the moment would terminate. I believe it was the sight of me that decided it after all. A quick movement of irritation passed over his face.

'I think you are right, Chatty,' he said; 'I think you are right. I am not fit, in my shattered state, and with the information I have just received, to pay the attention I would like to pay——' He paused, and looked at me fixedly. 'It is a great trouble to me that we have never been able to show you proper attention, Mr. Temple. You see, my son was detained; and now he is dead—and I've never known it till this moment. You will excuse a reception which is not the kind of reception I would like to give you.' He waved his hand. 'You were my Colin's friend. You will know how to make allowances. Yes, my dear, I am best in my own chamber. I will just go, with Mr. Temple's permission—go—to my bed.'

A faint groan burst from him as he said these words; a kind of dreary smile flickered on his lips. 'To my bed,' he repeated;

'that is all we can do, we old folk, when we are stricken by God's hand. Lie down, and turn our faces to the wall—our faces to the wall.' He rose up, and took his daughter's arm, and made a few steps towards the door, which I was holding open for him. Then he turned and looked round with the air of one who has a favour to bestow. 'You may come too, Marg'ret,' he said. 'You can come and help me to my bed.'

This strange interruption of all plans, which it was evident filled Charlotte with despair, gave me much to think of, as I stayed behind in the slowly-darkening room. It was evident that now nothing could be concealed from him; and who was there so bold as to tell the bereaved father, in his first grief for his first-born, what horrors had accompanied Colin's death, and what a penalty the family had to pay? It seemed to me that the premonition of some fresh calamity was in the air; and when Charlotte came down about half an hour later, like a ghost through the dim-coming shadows, I almost expected to hear that it had already occurred. But even in these depths of distress it was a happiness to me to feel that she came to me for relief. She told me that he had gone to bed without asking any further questions, and that Margaret, who had been Colin's nurse, seemed almost more agreeable to him than herself. He had turned his face to the wall as he had said, and nothing but a long-drawn, occasional sigh told that he was awake. 'I think he is not worse—in body,' she said. 'He has borne it far better than we could have thought possible. But how am I to tell him the way it happened, and how am I to tell him about Ellermore?' She wept with a prostration and self-abandonment which alarmed me; but she stopped my remonstrances and entreaties with a motion of her hand. 'Oh, let me cry! It is the only ease I have,' she said.

When she had gone away from me, restless, anxious, afraid to be out of hearing, I went out, myself, as restless, as incapable of banishing all these anxieties from my mind as she. The night was almost dark, soft and mild. It was one of those nights when the moon, without being visible, softens and ameliorates the gloom, and makes of night a sort of twilight. While I went pacing softly about, to occupy myself, a soft small rain began to fall; but this did not affect me in any way. It was rather soothing than disagreeable. I went down to the side of the loch, where the pale light on the water was touched by innumerable dimplings of the rain, then up again, round and round the house, not caring where I went. At this hour I had always

avoided the Lady's Walk, I can scarcely tell why. To-night, in my strange familiarity with everything, and carelessness of all but one subject, I suddenly turned into it with a caprice I could not account for, perhaps with an unexpressed wish for company, for somebody who might understand my thoughts. The mystic footsteps gave me a sort of pleasure. Whether it was habit or some new sense of human fellowship which Charlotte's impassioned words had caused, I can scarcely tell; but the excitement with which I had always hitherto regarded the mysterious watcher here was altogether gone out of my mind. I felt a profound and tender pity for her rising in me instead. Was it possible that a spirit could be 'over-anxious,' as Charlotte said, endeavouring vainly, and yet not undutifully, to take God's supreme guardianship out of His hands? The thought was new to me. To think that a good and blessed creature could so err, could mistake so humanly and persevere so patiently, though never able to remedy the evils, seemed somehow more possible than that a guardian from Heaven could watch and watch for generations with so little result. This gave me a great compassion for the lonely watcher thus rebelling in a heavenly way of love against the law of nature that separated her from visible life. My old idea, that it might be Charlotte herself in an unconscious shadow-shape, whose protecting motherly love made these efforts unawares, glided gratefully into the feeling that it was an earlier Charlotte, her very kin and prototype, who could not even now let God manage her race without her aid. While I was thus thinking, I was startled once more by the same sigh which I had heard with Charlotte. Yes, yes, it might be the wind. I had no time to bandy explanations with myself. It was a soft long sigh, such as draws the very breath out of an over-laden bosom. I turned half round, it was so near to me; and there, by my side, so close that I could have touched her, stood the Lady whom I had seen so often—the same figure which I had met in the London streets and in the woods of Ellermore. I suppose I stepped back, with a little thrill of the old sensations, for she seemed to put out a hand in the pale gloom, and began to speak softly, quickly, as if there was scarcely time enough for what she had to say.

'I am going away like the rest,' she said. 'None of them have ever bid me go before; but it is true—it is true what she says. I have never done any good—just frightened them, or pleased them. It is in better hands—it is in better hands.'

With this there came the familiar movement, the wringing of the hands, which was like Charlotte, and she seemed to weep; but before I could say anything (and what could I have said?) she cried with eagerness, 'I came to you because you loved her, but you were too late—and now again, again! you may help if you will. It will be set before you to help, if you will.'

'How can I help?' I cried. 'Tell me, Lady, whoever you are; I will do it, I will do it!—but how can I do it? Tell me——'

I put out my hand to touch her dress, but it melted out of my hold. She withdrew with a swift, shy movement. 'It will be set before you,' she said, with a breathless faintness as if of haste; and already her voice was further off breathing away. 'It will be set before you—I must not say more. One can never say more.'

'What can I do?' I cried; so much had I forgot the old terror that I put myself in her path, stopping the way. 'Tell me how, how! Tell me, for God's sake, and because of Charlotte!'

The shadowy figure retreated before me. It seemed to fade, then reappeared, then dissolved altogether into the white dimness, while the voice floated away, still saying, as in a sigh, 'You may help, you may help, you may save——' I could hear no more. I went after this sighing voice to the end of the Walk; it seemed to me that I was pursuing, determined to hear her message, and that she softly fled, the hurrying footsteps becoming almost inaudible as they flew before me. I went on hotly, not knowing what I did, determined only to know what it was; to get an explanation, by what means I did not care. Suddenly, before I knew, I found my steps stumbling down the slope at the further end, and the pale water alive with all the dimplings of the rain appearing at my very feet. The steps sank upon the loch-side, and ceased with a thrill like the acutest sound. A silence more absolute than any I have heard in nature ensued. I stood gasping, with my foot touching the edge of the water; it was all I could do to arrest myself there.

I hurried back to the house in a state of agitation, which I cannot describe. It was partly nervous dread. I do not disguise this; but partly it was a bewildered anxiety and eagerness to know what the chance was which was to be set before me. That I had the most absolute faith in it I need hardly say. 'You may help them if you will! . You may help them if you will! I said it over and over to myself a thousand times with a feverish hurry and eagerness. Indeed, I did nothing but repeat it. When Charlotte came down late to tell me her father was asleep, that

the doctor who had been sent for had pronounced his recovery real, I was walking up and down the half-lighted drawing-room, saying these words over and over to myself.

'He says it is wonderful, but it may be complete recovery,' Charlotte said; 'only to tell him nothing we can help, to keep all the circumstances from him; especially, if it is possible, about Ellermore. But how is it possible? how can I do it? "Help it you will?" Mr. Temple, what are you saying?'

'It is nothing,' I said; 'some old rhyme that has got possession of me.'

She looked very anxiously into my face. 'Something else has happened? You have seen or heard——' Her mind was so alive to every tone and glance that it was scarcely possible to conceal a thought from her.

'I have been in the Walk,' I said, 'and being excited and restless, it was more than my nerves could bear.'

She looked at me again wistfully. 'You would not deceive me, Mr. Temple,' she said; then returned to her original subject. The doctor was anxious, above all things, that Mr. Campbell should leave Ellermore to-morrow, that he should go early, and above all that he should not suspect the reason why. She had the same dread of the removal as ever, but there was no alternative, and not even a day's delay was to be thought of, for every day, every hour, made the chances of discovery more.

'But you cannot keep up the delusion for ever,' I said, 'and when it is found out?'

Again she wrung her hands. 'It is against my judgment; but what can I do?' She paused a moment, and then said, with a melancholy dignity, 'It can but kill him, soon or syne. I would not myself have my life saved by a lie; but I am weak where my father is concerned, and God understands all. Oh, I am beginning to feel that so, Mr. Temple! We search and search, and think what is best, and we make a hundred mistakes, but God sees the why and the wherefore. Whoever misunderstands, He never misunderstands.'

She went away from me in the calm of this thought, the secret of all calm. It seemed to me that I, in my blind anxiety guessing at the enigma that had been given to me, and my poor Lady vagrant from the skies, still trying to be the providence of this house, were left alike behind.

Next morning Charlotte came down to breakfast with me, which she had not done before. She told me that her father

had passed a good night, that he had shed tears on awaking, and began to talk tenderly and calmly of Colin, and that everything seemed to promise that the softening and mournful pre-occupation of grief, distracting his mind from other matters, would be an advantage to him. He was pleased to be left with Margaret, who had adored her nursling, and who had been fully warned of the necessity of keeping silence as to the circumstances of Colin's death. The post-bag came in while we were talking. It lay on the table for a few minutes untouched, for neither of us were anxious for our correspondence. We were alone at table, and Charlotte had rested, though I had not, and was almost cheerful now that the moment had arrived for the final severance. The necessity of doing inspired her; and perhaps, though I scarcely dared to think so, this tranquil table at which we sat alone, which might have been our table, in our home, in a new life full of peace and sober happiness, soothed her. The suggestion it conveyed made the blood dance in my veins. For the moment it seemed as if the hope I dared not even entertain, for one calm hour of blessedness and repose, had come true.

At last she gave me the key, and asked me to open the bag. 'I have been loth to disturb this peaceful moment,' she said, with a smile which was full of sweetness and confidence, 'and nothing outside seems of much consequence just now; but the boys may have something to tell, and there will be your letters—will you open it, Mr. Temple?' I, too, was loth, more loth than she, to disturb the calm, and the outside world was nothing to me, while I sat here with her, and could fancy her my own. But I did what she told me. Letters are like fate, they must be encountered with all that is good and evil in them. I gave her hers, and laid out some, probably as important to them, though they seemed to me so trifling and unnecessary, that were for the servants. Then I turned to my own share. I had two letters, one with a broad black border, which had been forwarded from one place to another in search of me, and was nearly ten days old; for, like most people, I examined the outside first; the other a large, substantial blue letter, which meant business. I can remember now the indifference with which I opened them, the mourning envelope first. There were so many postmarks on it, that that of its origin, which would have enlightened me at once, never struck me at all.

Heaven above! what was this that met my eyes? An announcement, full of the periphrasis of formal regret, of the death of my old cousin Jocelyn ten days before. I gave a sort of fierce

cry—I can hear it now—and tore open the second, the official letter. Of course I knew what it was ; of course I was aware that nothing could interfere ; and yet the opportuneness of the announcement was such, that human nature, accustomed to be balked, would not allow me to believe in the possibility. Then I sprang from my seat. ‘I must go,’ I cried ; ‘there is not a moment to lose. Stop all proceedings—do nothing about the going, for God’s sake, till I come back.’

‘Mr. Temple, what has happened ? Charley ——,’ cried Charlotte, blanched with terror. She thought some other catastrophe had happened, some still more fatal news that I would not tell her. But I was too much absorbed in my own excitement to think of this.

‘Do nothing,’ I said ; ‘I will meet Charley on the way, and tell him. All will be right, all will be right, only wait till I come back.’ I rushed to the door in my haste, then came back again, not knowing what I did, and had caught her in my arms before I was aware—not in my arms, but with my hands on her shoulders, holding her for one wild moment. I could hardly see her for the water in my eyes. ‘Wait,’ I said, ‘wait till I come back ! Now I can do what she said ! Now my time is come ; do nothing till I come back.’ I let my hands drop down to hers, and caught them, and kissed them in a wild tremor, beyond explanation. Then I rushed away. It was a mile or more to the little quay where the morning boat carried communications back to the world. I seemed to be there as on wings, and scarcely came to myself till I descended into the noise, the haze, the roar of the damp streets, the crowds and traffic of Glasgow. Next moment (for time flew and I with it, so that I took no note of its progress or my own) I was in the clamour of the ‘Works,’ making my way through the grime and mud of a great courtyard, with machinery clanging round me on every side, from the big skeleton houses with their open windows—into the office, where Charley, in close converse with a stranger, jumped up with terror at the sight of me. ‘What has happened ?’ he cried ; ‘my father ?’ I had scarcely breath enough to say what I had to say. ‘Your father,’ I cried, ‘has come to himself. You can make no sale without him—every arrangement must be stopped at once.’ All that I was capable of knowing was with a certainty, beyond all proof, that the man with whom Charley was talking, a sportsman in every line of his countenance and clothes, was the intending purchaser of Ellermore.

I remember little of the conversation that followed. It was

stormy and excited, for neither would Charley be convinced nor would the other consent to be off his bargain. But I made my point clear. Mr. Campbell having recovered his faculties, it was clear that no treaty could be concluded without his consent. (It could not have been legal in any case, but I suppose they had in some way got over this.) I remember Charley turning upon me with a passionate remonstrance, when, almost by violence and pertinacity, I had driven his Cockney sportsman away. 'I cannot conceive what is your object, Temple,' he said. 'Are you mad? my father must give his consent; there is no possibility of a question about it. Ellermore must be sold—and as well to him as to another,' he said, with a sigh. I took out my blue letter, which I had huddled into my pocket, and laid it before him. 'It is to me that Ellermore must be sold,' I said.

My inheritance had come—there was nothing wonderful about it—it was my right; but never did inheritance come at a more suitable moment. Charley went back with me that afternoon, after a hurried conference with his young brothers, who came round me, shaking my arms nearly off, and calling to each other in their soft young basses, like rolls of mild thunder, that, whatever happened, I was a good fellow, a true friend. If they had not been so bashful they would have embraced me, less I verily believe from the sense of escape from a great misery which they had scarcely realised, than from generous pleasure in what they thought a sort of noble generosity: that was their view of it. Charley perhaps was more enlightened. He was very silent during the journey, but at one point of it burst out suddenly upon me. 'You are doing this for Chatty, Temple. If you take her away, it will be as bad as losing Ellermore.' I shook my head. Then, if never before, I felt the hopelessness of the position. 'There is but one thing you can do for me: say not a word of that to her,' I said.

And I believe he kept counsel. It was of her own accord that Charlotte came up to me after the hurried interview in which Charley laid my proposal before her. She was very grave, though the sweetness of her look drew the heart out of my breast. She held out her hands to me, but her eyes took all warm significance out of this gesture. 'Mr. Temple,' she said, 'you may think me bold to say it, but we are friends that can say anything to one another. If in your great generosity there may yet be a thought—a thought that a woman might recompense what was done for her and hers——' Her beautiful countenance, beautiful in its

love and tenderness and noble dignity, but so pale, was suddenly suffused with colour. She took her hands out of mine, and folded them together—‘That is out of my power—that is out of my power!’ she said.

‘I like it better so,’ I cried. God help me! it was a lie, and so she knew. ‘I want no recompense. It will be recompense enough to know you are here.’

And so it has remained ever since, and may, perhaps, for ever—I cannot tell. We are dear friends. When anything happens in the family I am sent for, and all is told to me. And so do I with her. We know all each other’s secrets—those secrets which are not of fortune or incident, but of the soul. Is there anything better in marriage than this? And yet there is a longing which is human for something more.

That evening I went back to the Lady’s Walk, with a sort of fanciful desire to tell her, the other, that I had done her bidding, that she had been a true guardian of her race to the last. I paced up and down through the dim hour when the sun ought to have been setting, and later, long into the twilight. The rain fell softly, pattering upon the dark glistening leaves of the evergreens, falling straight through the bare branches. But no soft step of a living soul was on the well-worn track. I called to her, but there was no answer, not even the answer of a sigh. Had she gone back heartsick to her home in Heaven, acknowledging at last that it was not hers to guard her race? It made my heart ache for her to think so; but yet it must have been a sweet grief and easily healed to know that those she loved were most safe in God’s only care when hers failed—as everything else must fail.

THE END.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. In every case a stamped and directed envelope should accompany the MS.

Mr. R. L. Stevenson begs to thank the numerous correspondents who have supplied him with the reference to ‘Two Years Ago.’

The Editor has the following MSS in his possession which he regrets he is unable to find space for: ‘The Vicissitudes of Life,’ by Bertha Liddell, and ‘Some English Ballad Characters.’ If the writers will kindly send their addresses, the MSS will be returned.

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To J. T. DAVENPORT, 33, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London.

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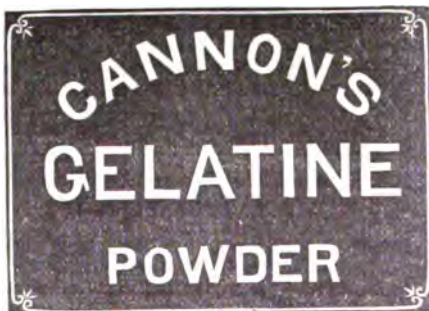
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'STOMACHS, a master all should dread.'

Oppose his laws—for Death prepare!
Obey them—Health will triumph there!
With grateful thanks I hail thy name,
ENO! and strive to give it fame.
(See,
Your SALT OF FRUIT can bring me
And give me comfort when I please;
By true aperient, strong or mild;
To calm a man or soothe a child;
Aid nature without force or strain;
Strengthen heart, liver, lung, and brain;
Make the pulse neither fast nor slow,
The blood-heat not too high nor low,
So bringing health at little cost,
Restoring what neglect had lost!
To ENO'S SALT I owe a debt
The grateful mind may not forget;
With rhyme that debt in part I pay,
Experience teaching what to say.

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Are as nought to a deeply-rooted Love.

'In every being throughout animated nature, from the most insignificant insect to the most exalted, ennobled, and highly developed being, we notice a deeply-rooted love, for one possession before all others, and that is the possession of LIFE. What will not man give to preserve his life? The value of riches, titles, honour, power, and worldly prospects are as nought compared with the value which every sane man, however humble and even miserable, places on the preservation of his life.'

With each bottle of ENO'S FRUIT SALT is wrapped a large Illustrated Sheet, showing the best means of stamping out Infectious Diseases, Fevers, and BLOOD POISONS, &c. If this Invaluable Information is universally carried out, many forms of disease now producing such havoc would cease to exist—as PLAGUE, Leprosy, &c., have done when the true cause has become known.

HEADACHE, DIARRHOEA, NAUSEA, GIDDINESS, &c. &c.—*HÔTEL DE CORBESIN, MORAT, SWITZERLAND, Jan. 28th, 1882.*—Dear Sir,—I have just been making a short tour through Switzerland, and whilst staying for a short period at the beautiful town of Morat, I happened to meet an old friend and patient of mine who was likewise on a tour for the benefit of his health. He, poor man, had been suffering from giddiness when rising in the morning, perpetual nausea, and constant attacks of severe diarrhoea. He informed me that he had consulted several London and Parisian doctors of note without receiving any lasting remedy; he was now about to consult me. I examined him professionally, yet I own I was puzzled at his case. He appeared to be in a thoroughly bad state, and I feared he was not long for this world; but, feeling bound to recommend something, and bethinking me of the wonderful remedy my wife had given me whilst I was an invalid (suffering under somewhat similar yet much slighter circumstances), I resolved me to recommend it to him. This remedy was ENO'S FRUIT SALT. I procured three bottles for the poor sufferer at the Chemist's, Morat (where he fortunately had some conveyed there by the Chemist from Paris), and then directed my patient to take two or three per day, morning and night. He did so, and positively, at the termination of that short period, he expressed himself cured. Sir, I write to you (as a professional man) to thank you for your great invention, which has not only cured myself, my patient, and many other poor sufferers, but has procured me a handsome fee from the grateful man. I now wish to express to the public (should you think fit to make use of my testimonial among so many others as I know you have) that I recommend ENO'S FRUIT SALT as a sure cure for Headache, Diarrhoea, Nausea, Giddiness, &c., and as a pleasant summer drink to those needing a mild aperient.—I am, Sir, sincerely (an M.D.)

SUCCESS IN LIFE.—A new invention is brought before the public and commends itself by its success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit.—ADAMS.

DIRECTIONS IN SIXTEEN LANGUAGES HOW TO PREVENT DISEASE.

CAUTION.—Examine each bottle, and see that the capsule is marked 'ENO'S FRUIT SALT'. Without it, you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation. Sold by all Chemists.
Price 2s. 9d. and 4s. 6d.

Prepared only at ENO'S FRUIT SALT WORKS, Hatcham, London, S.E., by J. C. ENO'S Patent

FEB 6 1883

LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY 1883.

Thicker than Water.

BY JAMES PAYN, AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' 'HIGH SPIRITS,' &C.

CHAPTER XIV.

BLACK TUESDAY.

THE Tuesday on which poor Mrs. Sotheran's repose at Letcombe Dottrel was so rudely broken in upon by Mary Marvon's letter, was also a black Tuesday for some other acquaintances of ours. Though Mr. Ralph Dornay had fulfilled his nephew's mission so successfully in Park Lane (not forgetting that little incidental stroke of business on his own account), all was not rose colour with him. He was under a promise to return forthwith to the Aglaia Club to inform his young relative how he had sped upon his errand; and this was not an agreeable thing to look forward to. He had done what he had been required to do it was true; but he had also slightly exceeded his instructions. As to his wooing of the widow, that was his own affair, and one moreover that was not likely to transpire very quickly; but the consciousness that he had entrusted her with Mary Marvon's letter made him a little uncomfortable, not because of the breach of trust involved in it, but of the possible consequences. Uncle Ralph took it for granted that Mrs. Beckett would read the letter and that then there would be a row with Mary. Of course Mary would stick to Edgar; she knew too well on which side her bread was buttered to do otherwise; and she would certainly inform him that Mrs. Beckett had been his uncle's postmistress. An explanation of that circumstance would then be

demanding of him, and Ralph foresaw that there might be a serious misunderstanding—he even termed it, as he revolved the idea in his own mind, ‘a rough and tumble’—with his young relative.

The ties of blood, as we know, were dear to him; if the phrase ‘thicker than water’ was to be erased from his vocabulary it would be a serious hiatus;—but still that might even happen, and welcome, if he could only make sure of the widow. He had made a great step towards that goal, but he had not reached it. And of the truth of the proverb that ‘there’s many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip’ he had had a very recent experience in Edgar’s own case. It behoved him for the present, at least, like a villain in a melodrama, ‘to dissemble.’

Anything less like a villain than Mr. Ralph Dornay looked, however, as he entered the apartment at the Aglaia Club common to himself and nephew, it was difficult to imagine. His jaunty step, his assuring smile, and the cheerfulness of the tone in which he said, ‘Edgar, my boy, I congratulate you,’ all spoke of a mind at ease and of the consciousness of benefits conferred upon a fellow creature.

‘What a capital fellow you are,’ cried Edgar, taking his outstretched hand, and pressing it eagerly. ‘You’ve seen her, of course?’

‘I should rather think I had.’

‘Well, what am I to do? When am I to come? I can’t see her in Park Lane, of course.’

‘Well, I should think not. What the deuce should you want to see her for?’

‘Want to see her for? What a question. Of course I want to see Mary.’

Then Uncle Ralph perceived his mistake.

‘Oh, the girl,’ he said; ‘I thought you meant the widow—it was the widow, you will be good enough to remember, to whom you sent me; I did not go to her on my own account.’

‘Of course not; I had forgotten,’ said Edgar, turning very red. ‘So the widow’s all right, is she?’

‘I hope she is; I did my very best for you, but let me tell you it was a very ticklish job. That is, I mean, it looked so. However, as it turns out, it was all a mistake.’

‘What was a mistake? That she asked me to marry her?’

In the excitement of the moment Edgar forgot that he had never disclosed this fact to his uncle.

‘If she did that it most certainly was a mistake, a very great mistake,’ said Uncle Ralph gravely. ‘I think, however, that must have been a conclusion, Edgar, which—ahem!’—Here he hesitated;

the sentence was difficult to round, but, nerved perhaps by some association of ideas, he presently added, 'which you must have rather jumped at.'

'Well, well, the point is that you have got me out of it,' said Edgar impatiently. 'It would certainly have been a terrible business to have become entangled with a woman of that kind. I confess I should not have liked to have been ticketed "Fortune hunter" for the rest of my days, which would most certainly have happened.'

'Considering the great disparity in your years, no doubt disagreeable things might have been said,' admitted Uncle Ralph.

'The disparity in years was nothing, my good sir; on the contrary, that would have been something to the credit side of my account: it was my want of money that made it so dreadful.'

'Want of money is always dreadful,' replied Uncle Ralph; 'people who have got lots of it don't understand that. You should have seen Mrs. Beckett tear that cheque of yours to pieces; it would have been just the same had it been a 500*l.* note. However, her little feeling of irritation was soon over.'

'Indeed,' said Edgar drily. He was glad that he was free, but he would not have been displeased had his enfranchisement cost the widow a struggle.

'Yes; she said that such a misapprehension on your part was an impertinence, but that young men would be young men.'

'Which no doubt was her objection to them,' said Edgar cynically.

'It was a very natural objection to them in one in her position,' returned Uncle Ralph, who thought he saw an opportunity of hinting without offence at his own recent proceedings. 'If Mrs. Beckett ever marries again, it would be, as she gave me to understand, some person of mature years and good connections, but with nothing particular about him which should cause her to be talked about in any way.'

'Such a person as Mr. Ralph Dornay, for example,' observed Edgar scornfully.

'She might do worse,' said Uncle Ralph, with a slight flush; 'indeed but for me (as we have seen) she *would* have done worse.'

Edgar Dornay knew something of women, but a great deal about men. 'So so: you have been making a stepping stone of your prostrate friend to higher things, have you, Mr. Ralph?' he said with bitter significance. 'However, *my* honour is not concerned in *that* matter. Did you give my note to Miss Marvon?'

'I left it for her, sir.' Here there was a knock at the door; it was generally Uncle Ralph who said 'Come in,' as he performed all other little offices that took trouble off his nephew's shoulders. But he now turned to the window, and playing on the pane with his fingers, began to whistle a popular melody. Edgar opened the door himself, and took a note from the servant's hand. At the sight of the superscription his heart went pit-a-pat, just as though, instead of being a member of the Aglaia Club, which, to say truth, was a somewhat 'used up' and '*nil admirari*' society, he was a young man from the country receiving his first epistle from his Dulcinea. He felt inclined to put his hand in his pocket and (though contrary to the regulations of the establishment) give the waiter who brought it a sovereign. Fortunately he restrained himself, or he would certainly have regretted his generosity.

'Dear Sir,—Mrs. Beckett has just handed me your letter, as well as your note of Saturday addressed to herself. I have no more to say to you save that I wish you well.

'Yours sincerely,

'MARY MARFOX.'

Edgar turned upon his uncle like a wild cat.

'You are a most infernal scoundrel, Mr. Ralph Dornay.'

'Sir—Edgar—you must have lost your senses.'

'No, sir; so far as you are concerned, at least, I have found them. If there is one word of truth in you, answer me this. To whom did you give my letter to Mary?'

'To herself, of course. That is to say,' he stammered, 'I would have done so had I had the opportunity. She was out, and so I left it for her.'

'In whose hands? You gave it to Mrs. Beckett. You may deny it or not as you please; I say, you gave it to Mrs. Beckett.'

Edgar Dornay piqued himself on his aristocratic immobility; but his manner just now had anything but that 'repose which marks the stamp of Vere de Vere.' Uncle Ralph, however, was not afraid of him; to do him justice, he was no coward.

'I had no alternative,' he answered quietly; 'she insisted upon it; you have no idea what a state she was in.'

Edgar Dornay flung open the door, and pointing to the staircase, exclaimed in a voice of thunder, 'Go!'

'Pooh! pooh! my good fellow,' said the other, bestowing his massive frame on an arm-chair, from which it would have been difficult to remove him without mechanical appliances; 'if you talk

of going, the notice to quit must come from me. If you choose to step down to the manager's room, you will find that the registered occupant of these apartments is myself, and that you are only a lodger.'

Edgar paused; for one moment he thought of precipitating himself upon Uncle Ralph, and administering that mysterious punishment called 'condign' upon his portly person, but more prudent counsels prevailed.

'You treacherous blackguard,' he simply said; and walked out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

Uncle Ralph drew a long breath, and wiped his forehead with his pocket-handkerchief.

'There, that's over,' he muttered; 'I've burnt my boats. I had no idea that Edgar had such a temper. He has not behaved like a gentleman, much less like a Dornay. It is plain that that girl has been comparing letters and rejected him. The words applied to me by my own nephew were "treacherous blackguard." How true it is,' he added, as he lit a cigar, 'that women are at the bottom of every mischief in this world.'

Nevertheless, though he took things with such philosophy, neither that evening, nor the next day, were such as could be marked with white in the calendar of Uncle Ralph. We can also imagine that the feelings of his nephew Edgar, houseless and for the present compelled to put up with such accommodation as could be afforded by an hotel, were not very enviable.

At Beckett House, too, matters were very melancholy. Mr. Rennie was away from London on business, drawing up marriage settlements for some country client, or assisting, with the same imperturbable face, at his interment, and would not be at home till the next day, so that both Mary's letter to him, and that of Mrs. Beckett, necessarily remained unanswered. The two women sat alone and apart revolving many things in their sad hearts. There were no visitors except Mr. Ralph Dornay, who came to luncheon with the widow as agreed upon.

She sat with him in the dining room for some time after the meal was over, as she had sat with Edgar three days ago; but with very different feelings. She had quite resolved to marry Uncle Ralph, and told him so without the least embarrassment or reserve; but he was not so foolish as to indulge in raptures. Like the young lady in humble life, chronicled by Mr. Locker, who thought in her humility that matrimony was 'too good for the likes of her,' he was really somewhat overwhelmed by his own good fortune,

and this feeling gave him the very manner which was, perhaps, under the circumstances, the most agreeable to the widow. Sir Walter Raleigh, after that successful sacrifice of his cloak to the mud, might have so behaved himself to Queen Elizabeth. The widow told him frankly that it was her intention to remain her own mistress and have the spending of her own money; and that in case of her demise he would by no means find himself a millionaire. A less intelligent lover would have protested that, if death took her from him, wealth or poverty would be equally indifferent to him; but Uncle Ralph only said that whatever arrangements she might choose to make would be acceptable to him, and would, in any case, be far beyond his deserts or expectations.

‘There is only one thing,’ he said gravely, ‘which I have to regret in this hour of happiness; I am afraid it will cost me my nephew’s affection.’

The widow looked at him with angry eyes, as though she would have said, ‘What if it does?’

‘You see he has not only lost you, madam, but through his very foolish and injudicious conduct he has also lost Miss Marvon.’

‘She has rejected him, has she?’ flashed out the widow. It was for her the happiest moment of the interview.

‘Yes, she has rejected him; and he lays his misfortunes at my door, because I gave you his letter to Miss Marvon.’

This was Uncle Ralph’s best stroke. Mrs. Beckett knew the value set by him upon ‘family connections,’ and appreciated what he had done accordingly. He had actually laid her under an obligation.

‘You will not have to regret, Mr. Dornay,’ she said, with a magnificent significance, ‘the having risked a quarrel with your nephew for my sake.’

‘I shall certainly never regret it,’ he replied with an inclination of his head and a drop in his voice; “blood is thicker than water,” but there are claims which are even less to be denied than those of kindred.’

This speech, on which Uncle Ralph plumed himself very much, was unhappily lost upon the widow, who had by this time—so swift and slantwise are the thoughts of women—lost sight of him and his self-sacrifice altogether.

‘She communicated with him, I suppose, by letter?’ observed Mrs. Beckett abruptly.

‘She? who? oh, Miss Marvon.—Yes. She gave it him pretty stiff, I fancy.’

Uncle Ralph had been so utterly thrown off his guard by the widow’s change of front, that he forgot to keep up his heroic vein; while moreover the remembrance of his nephew’s behaviour disinclined him to mince matters.

‘Mary has plenty of spirit,’ observed Mrs. Beckett approvingly. She would have been better pleased if Edgar had jilted Mary; but even as it was there was much to be thankful for. However it had come about, Mary was not going to have him. From that moment remorse for her treatment of the young girl awoke in her breast. She would have settled a thousand a year on her at once, with a great deal of pleasure.

Unhappily, however, one cannot liquidate everything by cheque.

As Mrs. Beckett and Mr. Dornay passed through the hall on their way upstairs, who should be standing there, hat in hand, but Mr. Charles Sotheran. The meeting was most embarrassing for the widow, but she smiled and held out her hand to him in the old way.

‘Why, Charley, what brings you here?’

‘Oh, nothing,’ he stammered; ‘that is, as I was crossing the Park, I just looked in. They told me you were not at home. It’s of no consequence.’

‘There must have been some mistake in your case, though it is true I did deny myself to ordinary visitors,’ said the widow quietly. ‘What is it, Simmons?’

My lady’s maid having just descended from the upper regions was standing in the doorway that led from the servants’ rooms with a hesitating look.

‘Only a message from Miss Marvon for Mr. Sotheran, my lady; her kind regards, but she feels too indisposed to see him.’

‘Yes, I know poor Miss Marvon has a headache,’ said the widow addressing Charley with an assuring smile; ‘perhaps another day.’

‘Just so; I’ll call again,’ said Charley, retiring with much precipitation.

It was not to be expected that the young man should have his wits so much at command as a lady of fifty and of fashion; but he was an intelligent fellow and could give a shrewd guess at what had happened.

‘By Jingo! there *has* been a row,’ was his muttered ex-

clamation as soon as he found himself on the outside of the front door. 'She called Mary "Miss Marvon." But what can be the meaning of that mediæval Adonis being alone with Mrs. Beckett when she is denied to visitors? She surely never *can*——'

He did not complete the sentence because some picture presented itself to his mind (which was of a humorous cast) that caused him to burst into a roar of laughter.

Mrs. Beckett heard it, for it came through the open window into her drawing-room; but, luckily for Charley, or even perhaps for Uncle Ralph, she did not guess its cause.

CHAPTER XV.

FRIENDS IN NEED.

ON Wednesday morning Mary got her letter from Letcombe Dottrel. She had not much hope that it would do otherwise than confirm her fears as to her parentage; still she had a hope. To the philosopher it is, or should be, a matter of no consequence by what means he comes into the world; it is one of those questions which does not concern him personally at all, but is peculiar to the preceding generation; but then we are not all philosophic. No man, indeed, who is not a fool thinks any less of a fellow-creature because of his birth at all, since it is a matter beyond his own control. But unhappily there are so many fools amongst us that they form a sort of spurious public opinion such as prevails in schools which are said to have a 'bad tone.' It is impossible, indeed, for persons who have the bar sinister on their shields not to be aware of the prejudice that exists against them among this class of persons; and if they are of a sensitive disposition, it rankles in them, as though a man should blush for shame because he hears it whispered, 'that fellow has red hair.' Mary Marvon, for example, felt that it would be a great aggravation of her unhappy lot in the world to find herself illegitimate.

'My dear Mary,' wrote Mrs. Sotheran, 'your letter has distressed me beyond expression. If I am to answer your most painful question by the simple "yes" or "no," which you request of me, I must needs say "yes"; for alas, it is true that you are illegitimate. I cannot, however, confine myself to that bald statement of fact, and, on the other hand, I scarcely know how much, or how little, I ought to say. The circumstances of your

birth are known only to myself and one other living person; it is a secret which I am under a solemn promise never to reveal, but this much I may tell you, or rather, since you have been learning "your true position in the world," I needs must tell you. My parents were of widely different social rank, but have long gone to that world where there are no such distinctions; they have passed, remember, beyond our judgment; it is no longer necessary to be just when you think of them, but only to be kind and pitiful. Your mother, though she sinned through love, is now an angel. As sure as there is a Heaven, Mary, she is there. Your father—well, I will only say of him that your mother forgave him the wrong he did her, and loved him to the last. It was from the apprehension, my dear girl, that you might press me upon this unhappy subject, that I have not done for you all I might have done; that, in particular, I have seemed to fall short (for one thing) in the exercise of hospitality towards you. And yet (though I cannot explain this matter) I was not prompted in this by selfish motives only. As regards your future prospects, I may say that they are somewhat better than you have been led to expect. I thought it best—I have done everything for what I thought was for the best, believe me—to make little of your expectations; but as a matter of fact you will be always out of the reach of want. A member of your father's family has hitherto supplied the means for your maintenance—not grudgingly, but as a cheerful giver—and will continue to supply it.'

'Never,' exclaimed Mary, striking the letter vehemently with a passionate hand. 'Never, so help me Heaven, will I take one farthing from that source!' Her face was suffused with a burning blush. Her very heart seemed hot with shame.

'For your present necessity,' continued Mrs. Sotheran, 'in case you may be in want of money, I enclose five five-pound notes of which I have a store in trust for you. Charley will see you to-morrow concerning a temporary home; there are some good people from this parish who let lodgings in London, with whose address he will furnish you. It is terrible that you should be driven from your present quarters so suddenly, so unreasonably, so unjustly; but I can see that you must leave them without delay. Mrs. Beckett has not written to me; a sure sign (if I needed it) of her being in the wrong in this matter; what she told you she had no right to say, in any sense. She did not know it to be true, since, as I have said, only one person beside myself is in possession of the secret of your birth. O Mary, believe that my heart is with you,

though I have no words to say so. And if there is no counsel in this letter such as you have a right to look for, do not suppose that it will not come; but I must have time to think and plan what is best to be done.

‘Ever yours,

‘JANE SOTHERAN.’

The effect of Mrs. Sotheran's letter upon Mary Marvon, although its contents had been anticipated and therefore discounted, was peculiar. It softened her heart towards her unknown mother; awoke in her all sorts of tender feelings towards the poor and unprotected of her own sex, such as even her charity had not previously included; but it hardened her against her father. Mr. Beryl Paton would have highly approved of her sentiments in this respect. The tie of blood—so far from its having any cementing quality with her—had an attraction of repulsion. She dwelt upon it in spite of herself, but she never wished to hear it spoken of by others. If Mrs. Sotheran could have looked into her heart she would have had no fear of an embarrassing question from her young friend's lips; on the subject of her birth they were henceforth sealed. It was a satisfaction to her to reflect that Mrs. Beckett had no real knowledge of the matter; and she was less angry with her for her pretence of possessing it than she would have been had she actually done so.

Again, though Mrs. Sotheran's communication pained her in some respects, it acted as a tonic, strengthening her to endure the hardness of others. She had learnt within that last half hour to suffer and be strong. The world had no longer any joys to offer, but she had henceforth one passionate desire—to make herself independent of it. It was terrible to her to reflect that she had hitherto been supported by her father's relatives; it seemed to her like living on the wages of her mother's shame. From whose hand she had received them she had no curiosity to inquire. Mrs. Sotheran's assurance that they had been ungrudgingly given awoke no sentiment of gratitude. If the donor imagined that he had made reparation to her for another's wrong he was mistaken. The desire of her soul was to work till she had earned the whole sum to the last farthing, and then to fling it back to him. She would have liked to have put those five five-pound notes into an envelope and return them by the next post, but she felt that her possession of them would the sooner enable her to repay the whole debt. She had already a plan in her

mind for gaining a maintenance, but money was necessary for her to start with. Mrs. Beckett's cheque would indeed suffice for that; but these twenty-five pounds, being the exact sum she needed for a certain purpose, would give her an immense advantage in her race for wealth.

Mrs. Sotheran's allusion to counsel to come was as clear as daylight to her. It was evident that that person was not at hand from whom it was natural that she should seek advice, and without whom, in material matters, she could not stir. That person would never be troubled for help or counsel any more. As for Mrs. Sotheran, Mary felt nothing but love and gratitude for her; albeit she had not seen the tears which that poor lady had shed over her own communication, and knew nothing of the pains and labour she had spent upon it, with a result far from satisfactory to herself; for her reflection, when all was said, had been similar to that indulged in by the gentleman in liquor, 'too much, yet not enough.'

From her window, which commanded a view of Park Lane, Mary presently saw Mr. Rennie arrive in a hansom. He did not come upstairs for many minutes, during which she waited for him with a calmness which amazed herself. It arose perhaps from the fact that she had come to the end of her emotions. She had gone through so much within the last twenty-four hours that only the dregs of feeling were left within her. There was nothing more of moment—or what seemed to her of moment—to be discussed. She could trust Mr. Rennie's discretion, if not his delicacy, not to pry into matters that would give her pain. She had heard him converse with Mrs. Beckett, upon matters connected with her two marriages, with the most admirable adroitness, which he owed partly to experience in his profession, partly to his own good taste, and partly to the fact that he had long disencumbered himself of curiosity; and she took it for granted that his present delay was caused by her hostess, who had waylaid him upon his way to her.

(Here she was wrong. The lawyer had business with the widow, as we know, upon her own account, though it was true there was no great hurry about that. She was not so eager now concerning those matrimonial arrangements respecting Uncle Ralph as she had been when they concerned his nephew.)

Of course, Mrs. Beckett would tell the story of their quarrel in her own way; but Mary had confidence in the lawyer's astuteness to see through what was false in it; and if he did not do so, what did it matter? What did anything matter? Still, when

she heard Simmons' step upon the stairs, followed by a heavier tread, the bruised heart of the poor girl beat more quickly. Though she had been beaten on the wheel so long she had not had her *coup de grâce*; she was still sensitive to pain. The door opened: 'Please ma'am, Mr. Sotheran to see you.' It was Charley.

The young man was very pale and wore a look of distress and pain that was very foreign to his countenance.

'Good heavens, Mary! What is this?' he inquired in tender yet excited tones.

'What is what?' said Mary. Her words were cold and hushed as falling snow. She had become frigid in a moment. It was the miracle of Pygmalion reversed. The sight of him, strange to say, had at once brought Edgar and her dead love to her remembrance. To speak of him in this young man's presence was impossible.

'Why your going away? your quarrel with Mrs. Beckett?' continued Charley. 'Is it not true then—what my mother writes me?'

'That there has been a quarrel? No. That I am going to leave Beckett House? Yes. We have agreed to part, that is all. It is a subject I cannot discuss.'

'Of course not; why should you do so? As though I did not know on whose side the fault lies.'

'There was no fault, Charley.'

She could not ignore his partisanship, or rather the affection that prompted it; but it pained her. Perhaps he thought, now Edgar was uprooted from her heart, that he might replace him there. If so, it was a mistake indeed; nothing would ever grow where that love had grown. Still Charley meant kindly.

'There was no fault,' she answered; 'or rather, I should say, there were faults on both sides. Mrs. Beckett said things which she should not have said, which perhaps she already repents of saying, and I forgot in my anger that she had previously shown great kindness to me.'

'It did not cost her much, and she could afford it,' said Charley bitterly; 'moreover, she was repaid ten times over, as I mean to tell her. For once in her life she shall hear the truth.'

'Charley, Charley, remember what you owe her.'

'I do,' he answered grimly. 'I am going to give her a present in return for it; a piece of my mind as a parting gift.'

'You speak like a boy, and a spoilt boy,' said Mary severely. 'I will not urge that in doing as you propose you will deprive yourself of a powerful friend, for such an argument would only

make you more obstinate. You imagine that you are about to make a self-sacrifice, instead of which you are merely about to indulge your inclination and flatter your own independence by a display of indignation. I am willing to believe,' she added more mildly, touched by his pained look, 'that you are also actuated by a regard for myself; if that be so, you will show it best by taking no action in this matter, which concerns Mrs. Beckett and myself only.'

'I will never do anything you do not wish, Mary,' answered the young man humbly.

The diplomacy of this rejoinder, though the Probate clerk did not know it, would have done credit to the Foreign Office; for in showing his obedience to Mary's behest he had delicately indicated his own devotion.

'In the letter from my mother,' he went on, 'she spoke of Mrs. Wilder, who used to be at Letcombe Dottrel, and who has apartments to let near Russell Square. It is not so fashionable as Park Lane, but very convenient.' Here the young man blushed from the consciousness that he lodged within a few streets of the house in question. 'I have been to look at the place this morning: it will be a great change from this I need not say.' And he looked round the walls of the bright little room with a half sigh.

'I can get on without leather picked out in gold, and a dado,' said Mary smiling. 'But I am afraid even Mrs. Wilder's establishment will be beyond my means, Charley.'

'Oh no; here are her terms.' He produced a card: 'It's as cheap as—I mean quite cheap and *clean*,' he said with an earnestness born of his narrow escape from the vulgar metaphor. 'They're country people, you know.'

'A thousand thanks; I'll think about it, and let you know, Charley.'

'Do, Mary; remember, it's very convenient. Can I do anything more for you—*anything*?'

'No, Charley, not at present. I must wish you good-bye now. Mr. Rennie is coming to see me on business.'

That gentleman indeed was at the door as they shook hands at parting. He shot one glance at the two young people—which erred on the side of comprehensiveness, since it took in somewhat more than had taken place—and settled down to business as the door closed.

'So you are going to "flit," Miss Mary?'

The abruptness of his inquiry was more than atoned for by

the kindness of the lawyer's tone. It made her understand at once that whatever the widow had said to him it had not prejudiced him against herself; while, on the other hand, it freed her from all embarrassment; it was clear that no questions were to be asked.

'Yes, Mr. Rennie; if you will be so good as to recommend some respectable lodgings I shall be deeply obliged; I felt that I had no right to trouble you on such a matter, but I had no other friend to whom I could apply.'

'I should not have thought that from what I saw just now,' observed the lawyer with a twinkle at the corners of his mouth.

'Oh, as to Charley,' said Mary with the least tinge of a blush, 'he is scarcely old enough to be an adviser. I never even thought of him. He called upon his own account, that is, in consequence of a letter from his mother.'

'To be sure: Mrs. Sotheran is of course aware of your intention to change your quarters.'

'Yes; she has suggested that I should make use of some acquaintance of hers who lets lodgings; but her terms are too expensive; very far indeed beyond my means.'

'I should have thought Mrs. Sotheran would have been as good a judge of that matter as yourself; being a housekeeper, perhaps even a better judge.'

'Every one knows his own affairs best,' said Mary stiffly.

'That is a principle which no lawyer can admit for a moment, my dear young lady. However, let us grant it to save time. I know one or two lodging-houses that are not dens of thieves; it is a question of price. What do you wish to pay a week?'

Mary named so small a sum that the lawyer almost opened his eyes. 'I shall not require a sitting room,' she explained hastily. 'You must know that I have a very slender purse.'

'Young people do not always understand their own position,' said the lawyer gently; 'it is true that they generally exaggerate their revenues; but sometimes they are unnecessarily cautious.'

'I understand my own position perfectly well, Mr. Rennie.'

There was an involuntary bitterness in her tone which did not escape the other's ears.

'But you have friends, relatives perhaps. I hope that you will reconsider the matter—for these things are serious—in case any tiff has occurred. Pray do not think me impertinent; I speak as a friend.'

'No doubt; I thank you for it; but I assure you that you are

mistaken. There is no one on whom I have the slightest claim. I am quite alone in the world. The kindness you have always shown me emboldened me to ask your advice. I heard you mention on one occasion the case of some young lady who earned her living by copying pleadings by a certain method so as to be as clear as print.'

'To be sure; by the type-writer; an ingenious machine but very dear.'

'I have the money to buy one; and from what you said, I think I could quickly learn to use it.'

'It is a poor way of getting a living, Miss Marvon.'

'It is not so remunerative as being a prima donna, no doubt, but then I have no voice,' said Mary smiling. 'If you would put me in the way of purchasing such a machine and of securing a respectable lodging, you would greatly oblige me, Mr. Rennie.'

'Your first request is easy enough; as to the second, I do know of such a place,' said the lawyer thoughtfully; 'it is a boarding house for ladies only. That is so far suitable, and no one is expected to take a private sitting room. The proprietor, one Tidman and his wife, are honest kindly folk; but the fare, I dare say, is not very luxurious, nor the apartments overwell furnished.' And Mr. Rennie looked round the room with a sense of contrast in his eye, as Charley had done when recommending Mrs. Wilder's establishment.

'Beggars must not be choosers,' said Mary, 'or I should say rather,' she added (with what the professors of the art of self-defence call 'quick recovery'), 'that persons who have to make their own way in the world, and who find fault with plain living and simple accommodation, do not deserve to make it.'

The lawyer smiled. He had always liked his glass of port and two high pillows.

'And are you in a great hurry to migrate, my dear young lady?'

'Yes; I should like to do so to-day if possible.'

'Very good. If a bower is vacant in the Tidman paradise you shall hear from me in a couple of hours. You will not forget, however, when you are translated into it'—here he held out his hand in farewell—'that you have still friends on earth.'

'I shall never forget you, Mr. Rennie, nor your kindness to an orphan girl.'

'Tut, tut, don't talk like that; it's true I've done nothing for you, but the very suggestion is injurious to my profession. The widow and the orphan are its natural prey.'

As he spoke the last words, he turned his back to her; an act—for she was weeping—that showed more true politeness than ten thousand bows and simpers.

‘What a kind man he is!’ thought poor Mary, left to herself, ‘and how delicate it was of him to forbear to press me with interrogations. A woman would never have been satisfied till I had told her all, or quarrelled with me for not telling her.’

‘It’s a sad case,’ muttered the lawyer, as he drove away; ‘I saw from the first glance at her face that compromise was out of the question. Mrs. Beckett would have been glad enough of it; she will soon wish she had her “companion” back again, poor silly woman, instead of the other; but the girl is made of sterner stuff. “I am quite alone in the world,” she said. “There is no one on whom I have the slightest claim.” That’s a strong thing to say and to *feel*, as I could see she did. I have never known any one who has not had a claim, real or imaginary, on somebody. The poor girl must be illegitimate.’

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

IN London, which is equal to half-a-dozen great towns clubbed together, there *are* half-a-dozen great towns, each so different from the rest that it might well be in another hemisphere. In some quarters, notably in the vicinity of the Victoria Station, where blocks of buildings, each emulating an *hôtel de ville*, are numerous, the astonished visitor exclaims, ‘How foreign!’ but in the district I have in my mind he would make use of no such ejaculation. There is nothing like it either on the Continent or anywhere else: it is unique. Nor is that circumstance to be regretted. The streets are narrow; the shops mean and dirty; and the neighbourhood is low. And the people. ‘Ah! the people.’ It cannot indeed be said of them, in the words of the poet, that—

They are neither man nor woman,
They are neither brute nor human :
They are ghouls—

but they are certainly very peculiar. ‘The British shibboleth’ of which Byron wrote is in all their mouths, but by no means spoken

with the British accent. It is only the female portion of the inhabitants that is native; the male is polyglot. Every nation under heaven, provided only it has a seaboard, has here its representatives. That they are of the earth earthy, in the spiritual sense, is only too true; but materially they are of the sea marine; and everything in the district smells—and smells very badly—of their calling. Flags flutter from every house-top as well as from the masts that tower everywhere above the chimney tops; nautical instrument makers, outfitters, ship purveyors, abound. These represent the export trade of the place; but the imports are much more remarkable. Shell shops, heathen idol emporiums, wild beast menageries, are as numerous as the establishments for the sale of toffee and penny fiction elsewhere. Fiction is here at a discount; no one reads it, though for the raw material of it there is a glut in the market. Who can behold yonder swart, ear-ringed Spaniard, that ringleted Italian, that shivering Lascar (bound for the opium shop), without the suggestion of a story, not, perhaps, altogether suitable for family reading. Negroes, Norsemen, Frenchmen, all as far apart in character as in clime, but with one thing common to all, a rolling gait—for each has his sea-legs on. Very good fellows some of them, no doubt; but others, as one cannot help imagining, pirates or sea robbers, murderers of apprentices, plunderers of passengers, scuttlers of ships. This, however, may be a morbid fancy. To the æsthetic mind it is difficult to think evil of men who wear rings in their ears, and are devoted to the fair sex. Of the latter fact there can be no question, or that the tender feeling is reciprocated. There is no coyness among the ladies in this latitude, nor is the ‘absence of the sun’ essential to the interchange of endearment; and there are some very pretty quarrels in consequence arising from the same cause which provoked the Trojan War.

Among the heterogeneous throng that crowds the narrow pavements this sultry afternoon, a tall, white-bearded man is conspicuous, partly because he has no sign of the sea about him, but chiefly because he is well dressed. It would have looked better had I written ‘because of his aristocratic air,’ which, indeed, he possessed in a remarkable degree; but I have observed that no aristocratic air can overcome the effect of a bad hat, and it is well to give honour where honour is due. In Pall Mall this man would have attracted little attention; his long white moustaches hanging like stalactites from his lip; his far-sweeping beard, white and fine as spun glass, would have been set down to

mere eccentricity, while his apparel would have differed little from that of others. But in the place where he now found himself the ordinary garb of a man of fashion was a stranger sight than the robe of the Lascar, or the pigtail of the Chinaman. The ear-ringed, ringleted sailors; the bonnetless, slightly-draped nymphs of the neighbourhood 'standing at the corners of the streets,' just as they did in Jewry in King Solomon's time; the vendors of cauls and charms lounging at their shop doors in wait for the Superstitious, all turned to look at him as he strode by.

If they had known who and what manner of man he was, they would have stared harder, and not a few of them would have endeavoured to make his acquaintance; for he was in possession of wealth which in their eyes would have seemed boundless, and had a hand that was ever open to the cry of the poor. On the other hand, there was nothing strange to him in those he met. The thieving Greek and the sullen Mulatto, the bland Chinaman and the grinning Negro, were all familiar to him; he had seen them, or their fathers, in their native homes, and he had seen them here. He was one of those rare citizens of the world who know their own metropolis as well as though they had been cockney-bred.

Some remarks, not altogether favourable, are made on him from time to time in a tone such as can hardly fail to reach his ear; but for all the notice he takes of them they might have been addressed to Memnon. Only once or twice, when some hulking sailor stops the way, does he appear to be aware of any impoliteness; then he walks straight on as though no such obstruction existed, his massive frame impinges on the churl's shoulder as it seems by accident, but in reality with scientific expertness, and the intruder is left gyrating. His shaggy eyebrows give to the still clear blue eyes beneath them a stern and almost fierce expression, which is intensified on these occasions as he walks on; on the other hand, when a child is in the way, his features soften; if the toddler looks at him, a smile relaxes his mouth and he stoops to pat some flaxen head, or drop a coin, which is not copper, into some dirty little hand, which fills the recipient with the wine of astonishment.

So he goes on his way, the observed of all observers, but apparently quite unconscious of the excitement he creates, till presently he reaches a shop over which is painted 'Burzon's Museum;' which is his goal.

To judge from the contents of the place, 'Burzon, Astrologer,' would have been the more appropriate title. From the low, dark

ceiling is suspended a stuffed alligator ; on the floor lies an Egyptian mummy ; and at the very entrance stand two globes, not such as the lady of newly inherited wealth and restricted education complained of, as not being 'a pair,' for they are both celestial ones. The walls are hung with various nautical instruments, which in a landsman's eye might well be used for casting horoscopes ; while the proprietor himself, in a high peaked fur cap and a dressing gown of doubtful colour, but which might be fitly termed 'the hue of ages,' looked like the younger brother of 'sage Sidrophel.'

The respect, however, with which he received his visitor was such as it is not customary for any reader of the planets to pay to mortal man. He doffed his cap and bent his head as to no ordinary customer, and murmured in the Hebrew tongue some reverent words of welcome.

'Have you no one with you, sir ?' he inquired presently, with a glance towards the door.

'No ; Japhet has got a day's holiday with a friend who speaks his language.'

'It is rather riskful, is it not, sir ? Our folks about here are a wild lot,' observed the other deprecatingly.

'I have been used to wilder, and, for that matter, to worse,' observed the other, smiling ; 'and though I have lived so unreasonably long, I can still hold my own with most men.'

'Still, if they only knew——'

'What I had in my pocket ?' interrupted the new comer. 'But then, you see, they don't know. It would, as you are doubtless thinking, be much safer to transact these little affairs through a banker's hands ; but I don't choose that my banker should know of them, nor anyone else save Reuben Burzon.'

A grateful smile lit up the dusky features of his companion.

'May the God of Abraham so serve me and mine and worse,' he answered solemnly, 'if ever I betray your honour's secrets, though He knows they are not things to be ashamed of.'

'Man, however, as I have good cause to understand,' returned the other drily, 'takes a different view of the matter. How is Verda ?'

'Well, or nearly well ; here is her last letter from Berck. Her nerve, she says, which she had feared had gone for ever, is coming back to her again. She has promised, according to your honour's request, never to perform again without the net.'

'And her father ?'

'Has ceased from all pursuit of her, and is drinking himself to death.'

'That's well,' returned the visitor, producing two little rolls of coin, neatly packed in brown paper; 'tell her not to stir from the seaside till she is herself again. And how are the little Paris people?'

'Growing no bigger, and more popular than ever. Antoine is taking fifty pounds a week for them, which is put to their account at your honour's bankers every Saturday. I think Hébert is choked off. His attempt to farm them on the ground of being their uncle utterly failed, and the Court's decision as to the arrears has ruined him.'

'But he is not in Paris? It is impossible that he can harm the children?' enquired the old man quickly.

'Quite impossible. He was given the alternative, as your honour suggested, of a prison or expatriation, and he is now in Sweden at his old trade.'

'The ways of Heaven are marvellous,' muttered the old man, knitting his shaggy eyebrows so that they formed one hairy line across his forehead.

'And as merciful as they are marvellous,' returned the other.

'You think so?' observed the visitor, drily.

'I speak as I find, and in recollection of how your honour found *me*,' was the earnest reply. 'I am forty years of age, so that it is two-and-thirty years ago; but I can never forget it.' A shudder passed over the speaker's frame.

'I remember. Poor boy, poor boy! It was in Paris, was it not—at Montmartre?'

'Yes, sir. Never did a child suffer from the greed of man as I did. I never look at my beasts there without thinking of it. They called me the cat king. I can see myself now in that dreadful cage with the wild cats, pretending to be their tamer. How they flew over me as I cracked my little whip, and gashed my shoulder. There was nothing but my flesh-coloured jacket to protect me from their cruel claws. Yet what was the pain compared with the terror of it? To this hour, when I dream of it in my sleep, I seem to wake in Heaven.'

'And you are still grateful, Reuben?'

'Ah, yes, I am still grateful,' returned the other, taking the old man's hand, and carrying it reverently to his lips. 'I remember the angel that looked through my bars one day, and beckoned me out, and purchased me from my tyrant.'

— 'He was your elder brother, was he not?'

‘He was my brother. But I have not yet learnt to say “God forgive him!”’

‘Poor Reuben, poor Reuben. Come, let us forget him and turn to better things. Show me your wild beasts.’

CHAPTER XVII.

AN INTERRUPTED BARGAIN.

THE relation between these two men, arising in the first instance from the rescue of the one by the other from a childhood of misery, was very curious. On the one side were affection and reverence and a fidelity that never failed; on the other, a matter-of-fact acceptance of those offerings of the soul. The Benefactor was not the benefactor of one but of hundreds; and there were some, though it is true not many, who had repaid him with the like loving service; whose gratitude was not a sense of favours to come, who did not look on kindness as mere stepping-stones to fortune, and who, though they had been raised up from the humblest of positions, were content. In Reuben’s eyes his visitor was an angel whom he entertained by no means unawares; whereas in those of his visitor Reuben was merely a worthy fellow in whom he confided and took some personal interest. It was not, however, altogether to please Reuben that he had asked to see the wild animals who formed the chief portion of his stock in trade, and were the pride and joy of his existence. They had an attraction for the visitor—who had another side to his nature than that which it most commonly represented to the public—on their own account.

Physical force, agility, strength—nay ferocity itself, perhaps, though he warred against it—had peculiar charms for him. It had been said of him by one who knew him well, that though he was a philanthropist, he had narrowly escaped being a prize-fighter. The alliteration had been too tempting for the epigram-maker, for as a matter of fact money would under no circumstances have been attractive to his friend; but he was by nature greedy of combat, as well as of dauntless courage. In earlier times he would have been a free lance who would have yet disclaimed to be a mercenary. It would moreover have been necessary that the cause for which he fought should be just. On the other hand, his character was far removed from the Quixotic. His passions were strong, yet were as water unto wine in comparison with his prejudices, which were

violent, unreasonable, and lasting. A cynical smile lit up his face when, upon his conductor's unlocking a crazy door that led straight out of the museum into the menagerie, he was greeted by a chorus of snarls and yells. He felt it to be a protest of the brute creation against the human, suggested by instinct, but utterly unfounded in reason, since his companion was their feeder and their friend.

The place was a mere stable fitted for the temporary accommodation of the animals brought to Reuben from every quarter of the world for sale. Here were lions in egg-boxes (or dens that looked little stronger) and tigers in rabbit-hutches. As for the less dangerous, but still exceedingly formidable animals, such as pumas and hyænas, their cages lined the walls, between which there was but just room for a man to pass without touching them, or being touched, just as though they were fowls in Leadenhall Market. It was difficult for a nervous person to admire what presented itself to his gaze, from the consciousness of what might be pawing, scratching, or even biting him from behind. Reuben himself, however, was no more moved by these attentions on the part of his four-footed and feathered friends than if they had been staffed.

'There, sir, are my old acquaintances,' he said, stopping and pointing to a cage which from its slightness seemed to be made for canaries, but which was tenanted by half-a-dozen wild cats; 'I give you my word that I never see them even now without a shudder of terror.' As they were showing their sharp teeth and swearing like troopers, with every hair in their bodies, especially their tails, instinct with hate and fury, his apprehensions would have seemed to most people by no means groundless; but it was evident that he was only affected by reminiscence or association. 'Think, sir, think,' he went on, 'what a poor child must feel on first finding himself in such company.'

'Ay, and think of the company that could be gratified by seeing him there,' observed the visitor drily.

'True, sir, true; and of the brother that could put him to such a trade—his own flesh and blood.'

'Ay, ay.' These monosyllables were uttered in a grating, almost menacing, tone. It was plain that it was not only the museum-keeper that was subject to the influence of reminiscence.

'What I say is, sir,' continued Reuben, raising his voice above the din of screech and hiss and roar, 'that these wild cats themselves are gentle creatures compared with such a scoundrel.'

'Mere purring domestic tabbies,' was the quiet reply. 'I

don't wish to hurry your movements, Reuben, but something is spitting at my back.'

'It is only the emu, sir,' answered Reuben carelessly. 'He will spit, whatever happens. Where he gets it all from I can't think. He beats any sailor I ever knew at that; and yet he's no tobacco chewer, either. That's a fine creature, ain't it, sir?'

He pointed to a magnificent Bengal tiger in a wooden cage above their heads, in which he was stretching himself (he could just do it, and only just) at full length, with his huge mouth distended in a prolonged yawn.

'He looks big enough and strong enough, but he's not in first-rate condition, is he? If he was in India I should almost have said, from the look of his skin, that he had taken to man-eating.'

Reuben looked at his patron admiringly. 'Upon my life, sir, you seem to know almost everything. The fact is,' he added, dropping his voice to a whisper, 'the poor beast did commit himself in that way on shipboard. It was only a Lascar, so there was not much fuss made about it; but it shows what he's made of. However, he's bespoke by a travelling caravan, where he will be well looked after.'

'Not the one my poor giant has joined, I do hope,' returned the other smiling.

'No, sir, no; he's nothing to be feared on in the way of animals but a spotted woman. She'll have him in the holy bonds of matrimony, if he don't look sharp, before the year's out.—What is it, my boy?'

A sharp-looking little Jew had come in from the museum to speak with his master. 'Please, sir, the Don has come. He says he will have no more shilly-shallying, but will you take the Lady or will you not?'

'Very good; tell him I will be with him directly. I am afraid I must leave you for half a minute, sir,' said Reuben apologetically.

'Don't mention it,' said the visitor carelessly. 'But who is the Don, and, above all, who is the Lady?'

'Well, the Lady's nothing, sir,' returned Reuben with a half smile; 'but as to the other, he's a very ticklish customer. They call him the "Don" because of his looks and ways; but handsome is as handsome does is my motto. In my opinion this tiger here is more to be trusted. He's a Mexican, over here for no good, I reckon, though he has brought me a rare piece of merchandise, that may, perhaps, turn out trumps. The finest fellow to look at as ever I clapped my eyes on, but——'

'I'll see him,' interrupted the other abruptly.

'I think it would be better not, your honour,' hesitated Reuben.
'If he only guessed——'

'Tchut! You needn't introduce me. A friend from the country who wants a lion; at all events, who wants to see one. Come.'

Reuben shrugged his shoulders. He knew by experience that it was vain to argue with his patron, and led the way back to the museum. A tall fellow was standing with his back to them teasing some lizards in a glass tank. He turned round with a frown that gave way at once to an insinuating smile upon perceiving that Reuben was not alone. He had not yet arrived at middle age, and even in his formal English dress, with a coarse wideawake which made a poor substitute in point of picturesqueness for his native sombrero, was a splendidly handsome fellow. His fine eyes sparkled like diamonds, his teeth shone like pearls, his very beard had the gloss and shimmer of silk, his smile seemed to light up his fine features like a ball room just prepared for its guests. A caviller might have objected that there was too much of brilliancy; otherwise he looked the *beau idéal* of manly beauty. His voice was low and melodious, and the broken English in which he spoke gave it a touch of tenderness.

'I did not know you had a friend with you, Mr. Burzon,' he said, raising his hat for one instant in graceful courtesy.

Reuben's patron did the like; the two men regarded one another with great intentness.

'I think we have met before,' said the Englishman in no very conciliatory tone; he had the air of one who is endeavouring to call something which is unpleasant to his own remembrance.

'It is possible; everything is possible, but it is not likely,' was the airy rejoinder; 'I have been but a few days in England.' Then he turned to Reuben, as one who dismisses an uninteresting subject, and in a dry, quick way observed, 'Well, about the Princess? Is it "yes," or "no"? I have other offers, and cannot afford to wait.'

'This is the lady this gentleman has come about,' said Reuben, throwing back the lid of a chest behind him. 'She is three thousand years old, he tells me.'

'And as fresh as a daisy,' added the Mexican sardonically.

The individual in question whose face was thus disclosed was very far from an attractive object. It was a mummy, though not swathed in bandages to the same extent as usual; it showed something of human form; while the features, which were exposed, had even some tint of life. The hair, which was coal-black, re-

mained on the skull; the lower jaw had dropped, showing the teeth and tongue. It was a weird and ghastly sight.

'You would hardly guess what that is, sir,' said Reuben, still addressing his patron.

'I have no need to guess. It is an Inca woman.'

'Do you hear that?' said the Mexican triumphantly. 'The gentleman recognises the lady. It is, you see, as I told you. Yes, she is a princess of the Incas, and dirt cheap at fifty pounds.'

'Is she yours to sell?' inquired the Englishman quietly. 'This inscription on the lid is a little suspicious.'

'He told me that that was the Inca language,' said Reuben simply.

'Nevertheless, it is what is now spoken in Peru. How do you account'—here the old man turned to the Mexican with a stern look—'for the words "Belonging to Government," which I see inscribed here?'

'I account to nobody,' returned the other, his face aglow with passion and his hand fingering his hip, as if for some weapon that was not in its accustomed place; 'the mummy is mine; I suffer no human being to interfere with my affairs.'

'Just so. You insist upon the rights of property. You were not always, however, such a conservative if I remember right. Let us hope your ideas upon the sacredness of human life have undergone some change. You show your teeth; that is a mistake, my good sir, since it reminds those who have memories that you know only too well how to use them.'

It is difficult to imagine how a handsome face can become hideous, but at these words of the Englishman the Mexican's features became not only terrible but loathsome. Every evil passion that disfigures human nature seemed to crowd itself into one concentrated look of hate and rage as he replied, 'You are safe to-day, my friend, but you will not be safe to-morrow; you may be safe to-morrow, but you will not be safe the next day: in my country vengeance is a dish that we eat cold.'

He turned upon his heel and left the house, though not as an ordinary man under the influence of passion would have left it. He walked softly, almost daintily, to the door, then turned round to smile—such a smile as Nero might have worn when the idea first struck him to set Rome alight—and swept his hat off, in grim *au revoir*, with the air of a natural Chesterfield.

'I think you will get your Inca princess for nothing, Reuben,' observed the old man with a dry chuckle.

'I hope not, sir, for to get it so might be to pay a great price for it,' was the grave rejoinder. 'That you have made that man your enemy is certain; though why he should have flown into such a passion, just because you hinted at his being a thief, passes my comprehension.'

'It was not *that*, Reuben; nobody minds one's knowing what everybody knows; but I have some private information respecting that gentleman. I met him once in his native land, where he was in hiding among the hills. He had got into trouble, like Mr. George Barnwell, for murdering his uncle; not that *that* is thought anything of in Mexico, but there were certain circumstances connected with his escape which rendered him unpopular. In that happy country no one is put to death for crime, but is deported to an island off the mainland and which is the home of yellow fever. The guards are changed every three weeks, which is an expensive item; on the other hand, no convict is alive after three months at farthest. Escape is considered impossible, as these men are manacled in pairs, and the mile of sea that lies between them and liberty is infested with sharks. Our friend the Don, however, is not one to be daunted by obstacles. He persuaded his fellow captive to take to the water with him, and together they swam across in safety. His first act on getting to land was to kill his companion in misfortune, because he was an impediment to his own escape. But even then he had not got rid of him. The chain that united the dead with the living he found it impossible to break, and therefore he took to his teeth.'

'You don't mean to say,' exclaimed Reuben incredulously, 'that he bit through the chain?'

'No; he remembered the fable of the file and the serpent, and did not even try it; but he bit through his dead friend's wrist and by that means obtained his liberty. His fellow-countrymen are not purists in such matters, but though they did not go the length of giving him up to justice, they never forgave him that expedient. They nicknamed him the "maneater," and that is why, I fancy, my allusion to his splendid teeth put him out of temper.'

'It is no joking matter, sir,' said Reuben earnestly; 'you have made a most dangerous and mortal enemy.'

'I have made many such,' returned the other contemptuously, 'and overlived them all. Tchut! He is not worth a glance over the shoulder. Let us look at your Japanese jars.'

Reuben's museum was in some respects like human nature; side by side with some revolting things there were in it some very

beautiful objects the worth of which was only understood by a very few persons.

‘The best I have are on commission,’ said Reuben ; ‘and here, as it happens, comes the very man that owns them.’

While he was speaking there entered a young sailor in a red shirt.

‘Well,’ he said, addressing Reuben and bestowing an easy nod on the stranger, ‘you’ve been an all-fired time you have in selling those jars.’ They were very handsome jars with a great deal of external work on them—cranes and water-fowl among reeds—and standing fully four feet high.

‘This gentleman is looking at them,’ said Reuben significantly, and with a look that would have imposed silence on any English vendor under similar circumstances. But the new-comer was of that nation of whom it must surely have been written by prevision, ‘the tongue can no man tame.’

‘Let him look,’ continued the American ; ‘they are things as can stand being looked at, them jars. A hundred and fifty pounds the pair is dirt cheap. It’s only because I am afraid of those water-birds flying clean away—for they’re just as like as life—and leaving the jars plain that I don’t stand out for double the money.’ The possible purchaser here whispered something to Reuben, who, losing his habitual caution for the first time, replied, ‘Yes, Mr. Peyton.’

‘Peyton, Peyton ?’ exclaimed the American quickly, ‘I know that name. Now might you by any chance be Beryl Peyton ?’

‘Beryl Peyton is my name, sir,’ said the old gentleman, drawing himself up with stiffness.

‘You don’t say ? Wal, now that’s strange. Why, I knew your son Harry when he was in New York quite well.’

‘Did you ? Then you knew one of the greatest blackguards that ever drew breath’—with which unexpected reply Mr. Beryl Peyton spat on the ground and walked out of the house, slamming the door behind him.

Never did speech intended to be conciliatory receive such unsympathetic rejoinder.

‘Wal, I *am* darned,’ said the Yankee. ‘What on airth does it all mean ?’

‘It means,’ said Reuben, with a very blank face, ‘that we have made two enormous fools of ourselves ; I for letting out that gentleman’s name, and you for having lost the best chance you will ever have of selling those jars.’

(*To be continued.*)

*The Irish Peasantry.*¹

LORD HENRY SYDNEY, in 'Coningsby,' objects strongly to the fashion of describing the peasantry of England as the 'labouring class.' When a petition on some agricultural question was to be drawn up in his county, Lord Henry framed it as the petition of the 'nobility, gentry, yeomanry, and peasantry' of the place; 'and would you believe it,' he says, 'they struck out "peasantry" as a word no longer used, and inserted "labourers."' I fully share Lord Henry's preference for the word peasantry as compared with the somewhat unmeaning phrase the 'labouring class.' My preference for the word peasantry when speaking of the agricultural labourers of Ireland is more especially distinct. The condition of Ireland is such that it would be scarcely possible to draw a hard and fast line between the yeomanry and the labourers. There is still a sort of yeomanry among the Irish rural populations. I need hardly say that in using the word yeomanry I am not employing it in the military sense. The yeomanry of Ireland, according to the good old acceptation of the phrase, are represented by the better class of farmers and farmers' sons; the men who ride to tenant-right meetings on their good stout horses, and some of the more fortunate of whom contrive to be land-owners themselves in a small way. But men of this class are not numerous and are not increasing; and as you descend in the social scale you find the line of distinction between farmer and labourer becoming more and more often effaced. The effacement, too, is effected unfortunately by the process of levelling down and not of levelling up. The farmer sinks into the labourer; the labourer does not rise to be the farmer. In many districts there is but little work for the mere hired labourer. There is hardly any need of his services. The small farmer works his little bit of land for himself, or with the assistance of his wife and his sons and daughters. He is an agricultural labourer in the strictest and hardest sense, even though he may have a lease of his little holding and is not

¹ This paper is one of a series which it is proposed to give from time to time, in which the peasantry of different parts of the United Kingdom will be discussed by writers with special local knowledge.—ED.

working for hire. Very hard work he does, poor fellow, up early and late, among the stony ridges of a mountain-side or in the perpetual ooze and moisture of a black boggy swamp. Still he has his bit of land, small and of little value as it may be, and he clings to the ownership with a passionate devotion. Byron spoke in bitter sarcasm of George the Prince Regent's affection for 'the land which he loved like his bride.' In a very different sense we may say of the Irish occupier that he loves the land almost as his bride.

Still there is a very considerable population of Irish agricultural labourers in the ordinary sense of the words; of men, that is to say, who hire themselves out to the farmers for daily wages. I hardly know how to picture the general condition of that class without seeming to exaggerate. Some forty years ago the famous Devon Commission described the Irish labourers as 'the worst fed, the worst clothed, and the worst housed in Europe.' I am afraid the description would be found to apply to the present day as well as at the time when it was given. Possibly there has been some improvement of a positive, if not of a relative, kind, in the condition of the Irish labourer during recent years. During the debate on the Address at the opening of Parliament in 1830, Mr. O'Connell stated that a labourer in Ireland who could earn half-a-crown a week was regarded as rather a successful man by his neighbours. Many thousands of persons, Mr. O'Connell told the House of Commons, were subsisting, if that could be called a subsistence, on three halfpence a day each; and at the same time O'Connell significantly added, a four-pound loaf cost tenpence. Things are not quite so bad as that with the average Irish labourer now, even if we make allowance, as we are bound to do, for the fact that half-a-crown had a much greater purchasing power in 1830 than it has now. But the facts brought out in the course of the same debate will show that the improvement in the condition of the Irish labourer has not by any means kept pace with that of other classes of the working population of these countries. It was stated, for example, that at that time operatives in Lancashire and Yorkshire toiling twelve hours a day could only earn three-pence or at most fourpence. To the Lancashire or Yorkshire operative of our time such a condition of things would seem positively incredible. I remember in my younger days reading an article in the *Times* on the distressed condition of Ireland, which dwelt with a sort of horror on the story of a young labourer who was paid by a farmer one halfpenny a day as wages along with his food; and I remember too hearing men who knew the

part of the country where this wage was paid drily observe that the boy after all was a halfpenny a day better off than most of his neighbours, for these very often had to be content with their food alone and no money whatever.

One has to bear these recollections and considerations in mind when studying the condition of the Irish peasant at the present moment; and I am willing to admit that, wretched as that condition often is now, it was probably still more wretched then. The extreme of misery now was perhaps something like the average of misery in that dreary time. But I do not see much improvement in the dwellings of the labourers; at least in some parts of Ireland. When we stand before a hovel which is about as wretched as any structure that human hands could possibly put together, even in humanity's most rudimentary stage of development, we may fairly say that we see no improvement there on any past time, and there are many thousand such hovels now in Ireland which are the homes of the labouring class. I believe it will be found that there are in Ireland about 93,000 houses with only one room in each, and that of the rudest and poorest kind. Now I do not see how house-building of any sort can get much lower than the stage of growth which is thus represented. Of these 93,000 one-roomed huts, most have floors of rough, damp earth and roofs of rotten thatch; their walls are without plaster, and a hole in the gable serves them for a chimney. On an average the height of such a hovel will not be more than eight feet. Into some of these cabins will be crowded a goat, a donkey, a pig, and several fowls, along with the occupant and his family. Now here, we may take it, is life in its crudest and poorest conditions. We do not need any comparison with past times; we do not require any statistics. A glance at one of these hovels is enough. We are warranted in peremptorily declaring that human beings never could have been worse housed. Men and women might indeed have been left to lie on the bare bosom of earth; but the building of dwellings could not be any worse than this which we see in Ireland. Even here, however, I am willing to admit that a certain improvement may have taken place in the average condition of the Irish labourer since O'Connell described him in 1830. Nothing could have been worse at any time than the worst of the labourers' cottages of the present; but of these worst there may have been more then than there are now. Concrete, for example, is now coming into use a good deal in the construction of labourers' cabins, and that is a distinct improvement on the mud

and clay. I think, too, that I can see in many districts of the country a greater inclination on the part of the labourers to adorn their little cottages with field flowers and in other such ways than there was when I was a boy; and this is in itself a sign of some hope. But the improvement in the condition of the Irish labourer, if there be any, has been relatively less than that of any other European population of the same class that I know of. Perhaps I cannot do better than give some account of the conditions of the labouring class in the county with which of late years I have been best acquainted; and I may add that that county is never cited as one of the examples of agricultural distress in Ireland. No speaker in Parliament ever draws his illustrations of Irish poverty from that county; no newspaper correspondent visits it; no sympathetic and inquiring traveller troubles himself about it. If, therefore, I describe the agricultural labourers of that district, and if the description seem painful and pitiful, it must be borne in mind that I am describing a place which is comparatively prosperous.

There are about 1,500 families, on a rough calculation, depending on the daily earnings of agricultural labour in this small county. Where a labourer is engaged in constant work on a farm, I believe seven shillings per week is above rather than below the average of his pay. Six shillings a week for half the year and five shillings a week for the other half is generally the rate of wage. When men are not kept in regular and constant work the average pay would be nine shillings a week for about nine months out of the twelve, and it commonly happens that they are unable to get work during the other three months. Out of this sum the labourer has, of course, to keep himself and his family. He often has to pay from thirty shillings to two pounds a year for his little cabin, and perhaps a miserable patch of ground around it, on which he painfully toils—when he is lucky enough to have it—to grow potatoes. In many cases a man pays as much as four pounds a year for his cabin. In a considerable number of instances the labourer who is not in constant employment engages to give a day's work in each week as the rent of his house. This arrangement sometimes acts harshly against him. The farmer who has let him his hut does not perhaps want his labour during a considerable part of the year, and does want it at spring-time and at harvest, when wages are at their highest. The labourer has to turn out then and give his work without reference to the increased rate of wages, and thus has virtually to pay a genuine rack-rent for his miserable home-

stead. A very miserable place it truly is. Anybody who has been in Ireland at all must have some knowledge of the outside of a labourer's cabin. It is a small, lop-sided wigwam, built of stones and mud, with a thatched roof, and with three holes left in the front wall to act the part of door and windows. The traveller who stops to look into one of these huts seems at first to see nothing but darkness visible. When his eyes get used to the lack of light, he sees a hovel almost absolutely devoid of furniture, and very often consisting of only one room for the family, however numerous, to live in. The mud villages in which the fellahs of Egypt live contain few hovels so hopelessly grim and comfortless as those that may be seen in many parts of Ireland; and the Egyptian peasant has a climate around him which aunts him, if he chooses, to pass his whole life in the open air, while in Ireland the rain comes down often for days and days together without stint. Into that castle of the Irish peasant truly the wind may enter and the rain may enter. On wet nights the drenching showers soak through the ill-thatched roof and come dripping down on the beds of the sleepers. I use the word 'bed' in order to convey the idea of a place where the inmates sleep rather than that of any article of furniture constructed for the purpose of being slept on. In many cases the bed and bedding consist only of straw and some old sacks that once held Indian meal or guano. A cabin with a second room in it is a somewhat exceptional possession with the Irish labourer of the poorest class. The food of the labourer consists principally of potatoes, or else of Indian meal mixed with flour and soda. Tea of the thinnest and poorest kind, oftener without milk than with it, is the enjoyment of the labourer and his family. It is the drink they would have at all times if they could only get it. I suppose there still are persons in this country who think of the Irish agricultural labourer as of a man going about perpetually with a bottle of whisky in his hand and ready at every opportunity to lift the mouth of the bottle to his lips. I wonder whether such persons have ever considered what the price of a bottle of whisky—even of the rawest and vilest whisky—would be, and how many such bottles the Irish peasant could treat himself to in the course of a year out of the surplus of his wages? The truth is that the labourer of this class very seldom drinks spirits or porter unless when somebody better off than himself is generous enough to stand him treat. Nor can he easily keep himself warm by less dangerous means than the swallowing of

strong drinks. For more than half the year in some places he finds it very hard to get fuel for his poor little household fire, and is often depending on the brushwood or the rotten sticks which his wife and his daughter may gather from the roadside or the ditches.

Where whole families are thus compelled to herd together perpetually in one or at most in two rooms, it might be expected that immorality of the grossest kind would be the result. I know that this is the result in other countries, and especially in great cities where a mass of the poorest among the population have to crowd together without regard to sex in squalid lodging-houses. But I say, without fear of contradiction, that no such evil effect on anything like a considerable scale is to be observed in Ireland. Through all these most trying conditions which I have described the sons and daughters of the Irish peasant grow up as a rule pure and moral. Where evil influences do contaminate them, these influences are external and not domestic. This wretched den which I have described, where so often the whole family have to sleep in one room, does still seem to have for that family the purifying influence of a home. I shall not stop to explain, according to my own theory, why this is so, but I say, without the slightest dread of my proposition being disputed, that it is so, and that the conclusion one might come to from observing similar conditions in other countries and in other classes is not the conclusion which can be adopted with regard to the peasantry of Ireland.

The Irish agricultural labourer is not, as I have pointed out, much of a whisky drinker, all things considered, nor is he much given to amusement. Amusements are very scanty and simple in the country places and the small towns of Ireland. The faction fight happily is a thing of the past; the game of 'hurling,' which used to be immensely popular in Ireland in my younger days, and which was a sort of rude or elementary cricket—a fine manly sport too, full of heroic and Homeric incident—does not seem to me to be practised much in Ireland to-day. The peasant class have to look to the occasional races, the hunt meetings, and the coursings as their principal sources of amusement. In some of the more prosperous of the smaller towns, as well as in the cities, athletic sports have lately been got up habitually, and appear to be popular; but I fancy they are shared in more by the young men of the town than by the peasantry, and afford the latter little more than the chance of looking on at something interesting now and again. In some of the smaller towns also, as well as in the greater, free libraries and reading-rooms are opened,

and are kept up by local subscription. In some places at least they are attended by many men who belong strictly to the labouring class; but, of course, there are miles and miles of country over which the labourer has to toil, and where there is no town, no village, no cluster of houses even; and there are likewise many rather considerable villages which seem to be provided with no manner of amusement or pastime whatever. Some of these villages would, it appears to me, have no chance of amusement all through the year if an occasional fiddler, or, still more rarely, an occasional bagpiper, did not happen to wander that way. Of course it is not always an evidence of poverty when we find a village without any visible means of amusing itself. I dare say some of my readers may have spent days, as I have done, in substantial inland hamlets of some of the more thriving American States, where one was forced to conclude that the majority of the inhabitants must have gone to bed immediately after business hours in the week days and after divine service on Sunday from the sheer absence of any existing sources of amusement. But the Irish peasant is, or used to be, a very different sort of being from the native American inhabitant of a New England or Pennsylvania village. Even still the Irish labourer in America brightens the severe and sombre business-life of the towns, just as the German does, with his feasts and his processions and his sports. But I think he is growing a less joyous person at home than he used to be. In some parts of the country indeed the Irish labourer has not a much better chance of being gregarious in his amusements than Robinson Crusoe. As to the labourer who does not live or lodge in or near a town, I can only say that I know of hardly any man on the face of the earth who has fewer enjoyments. He works from dawn to dusk when the working season is on; and he hangs about his hovel aimlessly in his time of idleness. At fair, or market, or race-day, perhaps, he meets a few friends and has a talk with them and a glass or two of porter, which, as a cheap and comfortable drink, is very popular in Ireland. He goes to mass regularly every Sunday, whatever the distance he has to walk to reach the church, and he follows the worship faithfully and reverently. He is in general strangely contented with, or resigned to, his lot. I often think there was much truth in Lady Morgan's dogma—and Lady Morgan had some sound common sense with all her flippancy—that the Irish peasantry would never be better off until they had made up their minds that they could not eat potatoes without bacon. I have heard stories of the resignation and the pious contentment

of some of these poor people, which would to most persons appear marvellous, and yet which are strictly true. A friend, who is the adviser, the protector, and sometimes the rough admonisher, of all the poor people of his district, who scolds them with as much energy as he pleads for them, has often told me that even he, familiar as he is with all their ways, was many times surprised to find such hard toil and cruel penury borne with such entire resignation. 'Ah, sure, sir, what would I complain for?' some old man or woman would say whose whole life to the ordinary observer would seem to have been one of mere misery; 'hasn't the Lord been good to me always?' I am not saying that every poor Irish peasant is like this. I do not pretend to believe that there are not discontent and repining and unjust complaint and passion and evil to be found among the Irish peasantry; but I do say that I have not seen or heard of any class of persons among whom, taken as a whole, there is the same amount of patient and unrepinning resignation to what they regard as the will of heaven. I speak now of Irish men and women in Ireland. I should not like to say quite as much of Irish men and women in England or in America. Among the energetic surroundings of his existence in these countries the emigrated Irish labourer learns easily enough to grumble like his neighbours. The Irishman shows his finest qualities of courage and energy and perseverance in other countries; but his amiability, his gentleness, his simple natural piety, come out best, I think, in his own land.

The Irish peasant is an intelligent man. Of late years he has become a great politician and an eager reader of the newspapers. When I speak of him as a reader of the newspapers I fear I may be conveying a wrong idea or indulging in too wide a generalisation, for it is unfortunately true that in many cases even now the Irish labourer cannot read. But he is a student of the newspaper all the same, for in the evenings, or at least in some evening of every week, when the papers come down from Dublin, there is a gathering at the house of some one who has a rather better room than his neighbours, and the political contents of a newspaper are read aloud and made the subject of keen and earnest comment. Many a labourer will go on to a second house the same night to hear the contents of the same paper read out again. Downright barbarian ignorance there never was among even the poorest of the Irish labouring class. The too true stories which used to be told some years ago by the late Mr. Clay, chaplain of the Preston gaol, and by many other men, touching the brutal ignorance of

masses of the English rural and mining population, never could have been told of Ireland. We used to hear then of men who never knew what the word 'God' meant, and only used it as an expletive of emphatic adjuration; had never heard of London, and did not know that England was an island. Not merely was there no such class of men in Ireland; there was no such man. Even among the scattered and remote populations of the west, even in those wild regions of Connemara and Mayo, where few speak anything but Irish, I am told that the labourers still contrive to get the contents of a newspaper interpreted to them, and are never entirely ignorant of what is going on in the world around them.

Strange and vague indeed that world must seem to some of those lonely men drudging on the mountain-side in Connemara or in Donegal. I have in my mind many pictures of cabins high up on some stony ascent, miles and miles away from all resort of men, where the labourer, in the seasons when he is not working for a regular employer, passes his days in trying to extract a few vegetables for his family out of a little bit of ground which seems to the curious stranger about as capable of bearing fruit as some of the petrified gorges of the hills around Jerusalem. In that hovel the labourer's family drag through their lives and die, the one great interruption to the cruel monotony of their existence being the tramp to the chapel on Sunday. Never in any country have I been impressed with so grim and absolute a sense of loneliness as by the sight of some of those western and north-western cabins, squatted rather than perched—the word 'perched' carries with it a wholly unsuitable suggestion of airiness and lightness—on the bleak surface of a marsh or the slope of a stony upland. The man, I have often thought, who can, under such conditions, keep up any feeling of interest in the world outside him, the world which he never sees, never is to see, has an active intelligence which is worthy of a better place in life.

Such a man is common in Ireland: a man who does somehow contrive to keep up a certain understanding of the outer active world, and is not wholly ignorant. It pleases him to learn what people are doing in far-away places which he can never see. He has his opinions about Mr. Gladstone, and about the French, and about the Germans. America is naturally a very living reality to him, for has he not friends and relatives scattered all over the States? is not his first cousin Jerry out somewhere in Nevada? and may not his second cousin Molly Carew be even at that very moment enlivening the corridors of the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York

with the energetic rustle of her broom accompanied by her rendering of 'The Wearing of the Green'?

At one time the Irish labourer had, and to a certain extent he still has, companionship close and constant which belongs to a world more distant and dim than that new world which lies beyond the Atlantic. The Irish peasant used to be a firm believer in the ghosts and fairies and phantom horses and 'fetches,' or 'doppelgänger' and banshees. Every valley, every wood, every lane was peopled for him of evenings and nights by this awe-inspiring and yet not wholly objectionable company. He spoke of the fairies as the 'good people,' employing that graceful turn of phrase in exactly the same spirit as the Hellene who endeavoured to propitiate the Furies by calling them the Eumenides. Good right too the Irish peasant had to endeavour to soothe and please the fairies; for was it not in their power to blight all his efforts at raising a crop, to spoil his potatoes, to throw his children into fits, to mystify him as he trudged home at night, and cause him to lose his way among the most familiar mountain paths? I have found that of late years the belief in ghosts and fairies, in 'leprechauns' and 'cluricauns' has been fading amongst the Irish peasantry. It still exists to a degree which would probably much surprise an ordinary Englishman; but it is not the lively unquestioning faith of my earliest years in Ireland. Even the banshee is beginning to fade from popular memory. Whom indeed has the banshee now to cry for? The heads of all the old houses of the famous septs are gone, and what Irish peasant could believe in the possibility of a banshee condescending to trouble herself about the death of some modern head of a household who may indeed own Irish land, but who bears an English or a Scottish name? It is not perhaps so much that the peasantry has lost faith in the banshee as that the occupation of the banshee is gone. Thomas Moore makes her wail over an Englishman, but then the Englishman was Fox, who was in his time the idol of the Irish people, and, moreover, Moore had lived long in England, and his song had lost much of its local colour.

I confess that I am not glad—at least not altogether glad—to find that the Irish peasant is losing his faith in the world of ghosts and fairies. In the hard prosaic rigour of his life and labour he seems to me to have been the better for some such picturesque, poetic, even if awful, companionship.

It seems to me too that of late years what people used to call the rollicking temperament of the Irish peasantry is not very

apparent. I have been in a good many Irish villages lately, and I have seen little evidence of the existence of Rory O'More or Micky Free. The English tourist who visits Killarney and talks with the boatmen on the lakes is apt to think that he still has glimpses of the Irish life that Lever and Lover drew so pleasantly. But the boatmen on the Killarney lakes bear about the same relation to the peasant life of Ireland that the men in armour at the Lord Mayor's procession, or the beef-eaters in the Tower, do to the real life of present-day England. The jokes and the songs, the anecdotes and the legends, are all part of the Killarney boatmen's business, and are got up by him as mechanically as the girl in the front row of the ballet gets up her attitude and her smirk. When the traveller strikes away from the limits of those regions which are prepared and dressed for tourists, he finds little trace of Rory O'More. A friend has told me, as an evidence of the high sustaining animal spirits which belong to the Irish peasant, that he has often seen the fishermen in Galway harbour, after hours of hard rowing, land on one of the islands of Arran, and light a fire there and roast a few big potatoes, and when they had eaten these, without salt or season of any kind, they would take to their boat again and to their oars, and would sing for very lightness of heart. But the Galway fisherman, although he is very different indeed from the Killarney boatman, leads a very different life from that of the peasant on the hillsides of Donegal or Connemara.

The stranger who has any interest in the condition of the Irish labourer will probably find himself puzzled in the outset of his inquiries by one perplexing difficulty. He has to ask where the labourers can be; where they are to be found? Without having had his head stuffed with statistics, he may perhaps have acquired the general knowledge that the labouring population, so far as we can distinguish them, are nearly equal in numbers to the farming population, and that between them they make up the bulk of the Irish people. But he surveys the country all around him, and he sees no evidence of the existence of any labouring class. Where do they live, these labourers? Even in the more prosperous agricultural counties he sees no clusters of cottages such as a labouring population would naturally inhabit. There are some solid and substantial houses here and there, such as farmers—Irish farmers, that is to say—would be likely to occupy; but where are the cottages of the farm labourers which one would naturally expect to see collected around the farmer's dwelling? Here near the roadside, or yonder in the cleft of that hill, is a

wretched little shanty, more like a decaying pigsty than a home for human beings; and he finds out that people are living there. Still, even if these squalid huts were decent dwellings, there are not enough of them to suggest the idea of a labouring population anywhere in that region. The labourers must live somewhere; they cannot burrow in the ground: where then are they?

One explanation of the apparent absence of the labourers' dwellings from the scene of the labour is to be found in the conditions of the poor-law rating in Ireland. The system of divisional rating has long made it the interest of many influential classes in country districts that the labourers should as far as possible be induced or compelled to live in the towns, and not in the rural districts where their work has to be done. The labourers therefore are in a large proportion of instances put under the necessity of finding lodgings for themselves, as best they can, in whatever town is nearest to the land on which they are to work. This perhaps may seem to an English reader who knows nothing of Ireland an arrangement by no means unsatisfactory. He may think that, after all, a lodging in a town must have some advantage over a dwelling on a bog. The sanitary conditions seem to him likely to be better attended to in the town; and he comes to the conclusion that while the labourer has his long day's work in the fresh open air, it is just as well that he should go to bed in the suburbs of some comfortable provincial capital. Perhaps he has visions of the labourer stepping briskly forth with the early sun for a cheery walk to his easily-reached place of toil; or he sees in his mind's eye a well-appointed train of workmen's carriages steaming forth at break of day from the lively railway station. The inquiring stranger must, however, get all these ideas out of his mind. Even the half-sunken hovels on the hill or in the bog are better on the whole than the kind of lodging the labourer has to put up with in the towns. There are very few towns, properly so called, in Ireland. Of cities, such as in England men would recognise by that name, there are only five or six. Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Waterford—these are among the few cities of any real claim to the title. Galway is a city, to be sure, in name; but it is not bigger than an ordinary English market-town, and one passes in a few minutes from its principal streets into the open country. Therefore the towns in which labourers are so often obliged to take up their abode when their work is done, are for the most part poor and decaying villages; and in the very worst and poorest suburb of each

decaying village the labourer has to find a lodging. He lodges in a house crowded by his companions in toil. They are pent together under the most unwholesome and odious conditions. They are packed rather than lodged. All the discomforts of the roadside hovel are combined with some of the worst discomforts of the Whitechapel common lodging. Moreover, the Irish labourer, like his poor brother everywhere, pays for his lodging at a much higher proportionate rate than that imposed upon the rich man. This is the case whether he has his sleeping place in the lodging-house of some town or in his own cabin in the country. But the cost, I fancy, is heavier upon him in the town than in the country. He has to trudge to his work a distance often of many miles in a climate where the skies do not long leave off weeping, and his work begins with the light and goes on until the light fades.

Under such conditions, it is not surprising if the labourers should sometimes prove hardly equal to the work they are expected to do. I have heard that in some places the farmers complain that they cannot get a full day's work even where something like a fair day's wages may be paid. I have heard this fact at once admitted and explained by the friends of the labourer. It is true, they say, that in many places the labourers do not work now as their fathers did. But is not the reason clear? They do not, because they cannot. Another generation of insufficient food and wretched housing is simply illustrating the natural and inevitable effect of hard practical causes. Parliament has for many years—indeed ever since the Devon Commission—been making desultory attempts at legislation to improve the condition of the Irish agricultural labourers. The subject comes up every now and then, and is discussed and postponed. Perhaps some clause is introduced into a land bill for the benefit of the labourer, and it turns out in practice to have no operation. I admit all the difficulties of the subject; I have had some personal opportunity lately of studying and trying to grapple with them. Legislation has attempted more than once to encourage the Irish farmer to borrow money from the administrative authorities on easy terms for the purpose of laying it out in the building of cottages for the labourers whom he employs; but the farmer does not seem particularly anxious to borrow the money. Probably a good many of my readers will think I am uttering a most audacious paradox when I say that it is very hard to get people in Ireland to borrow money from the Government, but it is the fact nevertheless, as the Irish officials well know. The landlord is

invited to borrow money to be spent on the improvement of his estate ; the tenant-farmer is pressed to accept a loan to enable him to build cottages for his labourers. The landlord and the tenant alike hang back from the offer. The truth is that they both see that if the money be borrowed it will have to be repaid, and they do not quite see that it is exactly and necessarily for their personal interest to accept a loan on any terms, however favourable, which will mean repayment at perhaps an inconvenient time. Much has been said lately about the selfishness of the Irish farmer in his dealings with his labourers, and especially in this matter of the labourers' cottages. I suppose there is an admixture of mere and sheer selfishness in the character of the tenant-farmer class as in that of every other class ; but it is unfortunately the truth that in some instances the farmer is invited and commanded by the State to do what is really not in his power to do. I have no intention of discussing political, or even economic questions, here ; I do not propose to criticise Acts of Parliament, or to have anything to say to the contentions of conflicting classes and interests and political parties. But in describing the condition of the Irish labourer I have thought it not inopportune to a proper understanding of the subject, to let my readers know that legislation has been trying to do something to better the labourer's lot in life ; that hitherto nothing, or next to nothing, has come of these efforts ; and that there are difficulties in the way other than mere apathy or indifference on the part of legislation. Apathy and indifference on the part of law-makers and influential persons of various classes did undoubtedly exist at one time, and that not so very long ago. There was something strangely pathetic in a few words used by one of the witnesses called to give evidence as to the condition of the Irish labourers before the Bessborough Commission two or three years ago. He spoke of the manner in which the claims and the sufferings of that class had been long neglected ; and he added that they had no help, 'no more than the crows upon the mountains ; there is no one to raise a voice on their behalf.' This state of things certainly cannot be said to exist any longer. How to enable the Irish labourer to become a thriving and an independent man ; how to help him, rather, so that he may be able to help himself and make his own prosperity—this is undoubtedly a problem difficult of solution ; but public opinion on this side of St. George's Channel and the other is awake to its importance now, and is determined that a steady effort shall be made to solve it.

The season of distress which spread over 1877, 1878, and 1879 fell with peculiar severity, as was to be expected, upon the labouring class. The potato crop showed a sad falling-off in 1877 and 1878, and was an almost total failure in 1879. Without troubling my readers with too much of statistics, I may mention the fact that the potato crop, the chief resource of the farming and labouring class, which was worth twelve millions and a half of money in 1876, fell to five millions and a quarter in 1877, was only seven millions and a half in 1878, and suddenly sank to three millions in 1879. Thus it will be seen that in the three failing years taken together the crop did not realise anything like half the value that was to have been expected, and that in the worst year of the three it only realised at most a quarter of the average value. But to add to the trouble of the poor Connaught labourer, the year 1879 was also one of considerable strain and scarcity to the English as well as to the Irish agriculturist. The harvest employment in England suddenly fell off. Now, as everybody knows, the English harvest work had for years and generations been a regular source of income to large numbers of the Irish labourers. The Irish peasant in many cases could not have struggled on in life at all if it were not for his periodical visits to England at harvest time. As regularly as men and women go down from Middlesex into Kent at the 'hopping' time, did many an Irish labourer start off for England in the harvest season. Such a man brought home with him when he returned what he considered a good lump of money, and he was thus enabled to face the long spell of little work and poor pay in his own region. Connaught in particular was always found to send out her stream of labourers to England. Connaught for many years had sent out more than half the whole number of Irish labourers who went to do harvest work in England. Each of the men who thus crossed the Channel brought home about fourteen pounds to his family. But just at the time when the pinch of distress in Ireland was keenest the familiar source of employment in England suddenly fell off. Of the Irish labourers who earliest went over to England in the season of 1879, many failed to find any employment, and had to go dismally back. Many in Connaught who had heard the bad news did not make the attempt at all. The Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, which carried 27,000 labourers from Connaught for England in 1878, carried but 20,000 in 1879; and of this reduced number a considerable proportion found that they had their journey for nothing, or worse than nothing.

That was a bad time for Connaught. Thinking of it, and of

what its effects were likely to be, no one would be much surprised now to read the observation made in November 1880 by a correspondent of the *Daily News* who visited the west of Ireland. In describing some of the labouring classes in the county of Galway he remarks that there is something 'strangely appalling in the pallid looks of people who live mainly in the open air, and the finest air in the world.' 'With the full breath of the Atlantic upon them, they look as sickly as if they had just come out of a slum in St. Giles's.' Yes, that view of things might well shock and amaze the traveller. We can understand that Alton Locke, the tailor's boy, who works all day in a vile sweating-room in London, must look gaunt and sickly. We should not expect to see the flush of health on the countenance of the somewhat stunted—for I am sure he was stunted, poor fellow—lover of Sally in our alley. But that people who pass the greater part of their lives in the open air, and, as the correspondent of the *Daily News* observes, in the finest air in the world, should look yellow and wan and corpse-like, that surely is something to set one thinking. We have all seen the peasants of other countries, who too are tried by poverty, and who likewise live mainly in the open air. The little beggar-creatures who run after one out of the villages near Naples, and who with stereotyped gesture of hand to lips inform you that they are dying with hunger—what pictures of health these little villains are! The children who scamper out of the mud huts of Egypt, where assuredly there can be no great profusion of food, how healthy too, and bright and bold they look! But the children and the grown people in such parts of the west as the correspondent of the 'Daily News' describes, are often brought down to that deepest depth of poverty when no influence of open air and sea breeze can avail in the slightest degree to counteract the work of a chronic insufficiency of food. If any one wants to be thoroughly convinced of this, he has only to observe the appearance of the peasantry in some parts of the same county where the distress is not so great. Pinching poverty is there to be sure, but not actual chronic lack of food. There the open air and the sea breeze are able to have something of their wonted power, and the peasant, whether man or child, looks a human being and not a walking corpse. I am afraid that the condition of things which the correspondent of the 'Daily News' described will be found to have its illustration more or less in many other Irish counties as well as in Galway. It will perhaps account for the complaint made by the farmers in certain districts to which I have already alluded, that they find it hard now to

get a fair day's work out of their labourers, even for a fair day's wages.

The picture I have drawn is not a cheerful one ; but it seems to me nevertheless to be far indeed from hopeless. On one of its features I should like to lay especial stress, for it is the most important of all ; and that is the nature and character of the Irish peasant himself. I do not believe I have overrated his good qualities if we take his class as a whole, and I trust English readers will agree with me in thinking that there is something to be made of him after all. Let him have but a fair chance of making his own way in life, and I am sure he will show that there is good stuff in him.

JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

A Mountain Tulip.

THE path up from the Llyn to the crest of Mynydd Mawr leads for some distance along the mossy, boulder-strewn course of a mountain torrent, which takes its rise in a fairy spring close below the actual summit of the craggy peak. It is a stiff pull for fair-weather pedestrians, this almost untrodden tourist trackway, with here and there a hand-and-knee clamber over great glacier-marked bosses of solid granite; but the exquisite glimpses we get at every fresh spur over the bare shoulders of Moel Siabod and into the cleft valley of the upper Conway more than compensate for the rough stony walking and the obvious damage to one's nether integuments. Very few casual beaten-road visitors ever find out these lonely footpaths up the less-frequented mountains; the mass takes its circular tour round the regulation road by Llanberis, Beddgelert, and Capel Curig, leaving Mynydd Mawr and its neighbouring Carneddws out in the cool shade of popular neglect. So much the better for those wandering naturalists who love to ramble among unhackneyed scenes, and to spy out wild nature in all her native loveliness, an Artemis who only bares her beauty among the deepest and most secret recesses of glade or woodland.

Here by the bank of the tiny torrent, where I shall stop and rest on a smooth stretch of naked rock for a few idle minutes, there is beauty enough in all conscience to charm the spell-bound eyes of any intrusive Actæon. The moist fissures of the water-worn granite are richly clad with filmy fronds of alpine ferns; the drier crevices among the tumbled rocks are tufted with the black stems and graceful foliage of the maidenhair spleenwort; and the scanty alluvial mould on the slopes beyond is carpeted by lithe creeping sprays of beautiful branching clubmoss. All around me, a wealth of luxuriant mountain vegetation covers the peaty soil of the hollows, or the shallow granitic clay washed down into the crannies from the weathering crags above. There are insect-eating sundews, with their clammy red-haired leaves inclosing the half-digested bodies of a dozen tiny flies, whose attention they have

falsely attracted with their delusive show of pretended honey. There are equally deceptive butterworts, with tall scapes of bright blue blossoms, and with pale yellowish-green foliage curled tightly round their mouldering victims in a deadly embrace. There are Alpine saxifrages, unfolding their pretty pinky-white flowers to the eager advances of the fertilising bees. And here amongst them all, in a sheltered nook of the inclosing granite *débris*, is the great prize of the day, the wee slender mountain tulip, in search of which I have come out this breezy morning, and whose actual home on the side of Mynydd I hardly expected to light upon so easily or so quickly in the upward march.

Of course I was told beforehand exactly where to look for it by the torrent's brink; for our botanists have long ago so thoroughly overhauled every inch of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, in search of specimens, that every individual station for every rare British plant is perfectly well known to them, and printed in minute detail in half a dozen British floras. But I feared that here our little mountain tulip might be quite extinct already, exterminated by the too pressing attention of its numerous *dilettante* admirers; for as soon as your average collector finds a last lingering relic of some moribund British race on down or moorland, his first notion is to complete its destruction by rooting up the one remaining individual as a unique specimen, to become a permanent record of his luck and skill in the brown paper treasuries of his own herbarium. We, however, are naturalists of another kidney, I trust; we will observe and examine our little treasure carefully on the spot, but we will not pull it up ruthlessly, bulb and all, or press its pretty blossoms under a dead weight of books and drying paper, in order to preserve its miserable mummy in the wretched cemetery of a *hortus siccus*. Long may it flourish on its native hillside, and may no scientific hand ever grub it up as the cruel trophy of a specimen-slaughtering raid! Indeed, to be perfectly frank, like the canny Scot who was 'no thot sure of Jocky,' I have not trusted even the readers of this magazine themselves with the exact secret of my tulip's whereabouts. I will confess that I have invented the name of Mynydd Mawr on purpose to deceive, and I have led up to the summit by a round-about path through the glen of Conway in order to prevent any future intruder from retracing his steps without me, and annexing for his own private aggrandisement the pretty flower whose life I have so chivalrously and humanely spared. When we come to learn the history of its race, I feel sure everyone will sympathise

in the sentiment which makes me wish to preserve this solitary colony of Alpine flowers as long as possible from the desecrating hands of the abandoned plant-collector.

First, let us look exactly what manner of lily it really is, and then we will go on to unravel together the clues and tokens of its romantic history. See, it is a little simple grass-like plant, sending forth from its buried bulb two or three very slender blades by way of leaves; and from their midst springs a graceful bending stem, surmounted by a single star-shaped white blossom. At least, it looks white at first sight, though when you come to examine it more closely, you can observe three red lines running down the face of each petal, and converging on a small bright golden spot at their base. Those lines are in fact honey-guides for the mountain insects, pointing them the shortest road to the sweets stored up in the nectaries, and so saving them any extra trouble in looking about for their morning's meal. On the other hand, the insects repay the flower for its honey by carrying pollen from blossom to blossom, and so enabling the plant to set its seed. I need hardly say that unless the young capsule in the centre of each blossom is thus fertilised by pollen from one of its neighbours, it never ripens into a seed-bearing fruit at all; and, indeed, in the economy of the plant itself the sole object of the blossom, with its bright petals, its store of honey, and its faint perfume (almost imperceptible to any save very delicate senses) is simply to induce the bee or the butterfly thus to convey the fertilising powder from one head of flowers to another of the same sort.

Our little plant has of course a botanical name of the usual clumsy kind; but in this particular instance there is a certain rough fitness in its application, for being a Welsh lily by nature it is duly known by a Latinised Welsh name as *Lloydia*. Now, I am not going this morning to inquire fully into the whole past history of the original family from which it springs—that would be too long a subject for an off-hand lecture as I sit here basking on the bare granite slope; I propose only entering in any detail into the last chapter of its chequered career, and asking how it has managed to keep its foothold for so many ages in this one spot and on a few neighbouring Snowdonian summits. But before we go into that final question we must just begin, by way of preparatory exercise, with a very brief account of its earlier origin. *Lloydia serotina*, then, to give it the full benefit of its Latinised name, is a mountain plant of northern and Arctic Europe, as well as of the chillier portions of Siberia and British

North America. Further south, it is found only in the colder upland shoulders of the Alps, the Caucasus, and the Altai range, as well as in a few other great snowy mountain systems; but in Britain it occurs nowhere except on one or two of the higher mountains here in North Wales. By origin, it is a very early and simple offshoot of the great Lily tribe; one of the most primitive lilies, indeed, now existing on the face of the earth. Like all others of that vast family, it has six petals and six stamens or pollen-bearing sacs; but it still retains a very early form of lily flower in its open star-shaped blossom, as well as in one or two other smaller peculiarities. The cultivated tulips of our gardens, varieties of a wild Levantine species, are all descended from a somewhat similar form; but with them the course of development has gone much further; the petals have grown far larger and more conspicuous, in order to allure the eyes of bigger southern insects, and the general form of the flower has become bell-shaped instead of star-shaped, in order to ensure more safe and certain fertilisation by these winged allies; for in a tubular blossom the pollen is much more likely to be brushed off from the insect's head on to the proper portion of the unripe capsule than in an open spreading flower like our *Lloydia* here. Hence we may fairly say that *Lloydia* represents an early ancestral form from which the modern and more southerly tulips are nature's enlarged and improved varieties.

But how did these pretty little white lilies get here, and why do they still remain here in their early simple form, while their southern sisters elsewhere have been slowly modified into brilliant yellow bell-shaped tulips? Thereby hangs a most curious and delightful tale. For I have very little doubt that the ancestors of our pretty lilies here have been growing uninterruptedly in the present spot for many thousands of years, and that during all that time they have gone on reproducing themselves by seed from time to time, without once having crossed their stock with any of their congeners in the Arctic regions or in the great snow-clad ranges of central Europe. Indeed, I very much doubt whether they have ever even intermarried with their neighbours on the other Snowdonian summits, for I think I shall be able to show good reasons for believing that each of these little isolated colonies has lived on for ages all by itself on each of their three scattered peaks in the North Welsh district.

It is a curious fact, certainly, that one should find a single species of Arctic flower reappearing at such long distances in such

isolated spots under closely similar circumstances. If we go to the great snow-clad stretches of land which extend around the Arctic circle in Europe, Asia, and America, we shall everywhere find our little lily growing in abundance close up to the line of perpetual snow, though its diverse habitats are there divided by wide expanses of open sea. If, again, we cross the whole of the German plains, we shall see no *Lloydias* in the intervening tract ; but when we reach the Alps and the Pyrenees, we shall a second time come upon other isolated colonies of the self-same flower. Once more, we may turn eastward, and we shall meet with it, after a long march, among the Carpathians and the Caucasus ; or we may turn westward, and then we shall light upon it again on the craggy sides of a few solitary Welsh mountains. How does it come that in every cold tract we find the self-same species recurring again and again wherever the circumstances are fitted for its growth ? and how have its seeds or bulbs been conveyed across such wide stretches of intervening sea or valley to so many distinct and separate chilly regions ?

One obvious answer might be, that under similar conditions a like flower had everywhere been developed from some common plant of lowland or temperate districts. But in reality such absolute similarity of independent development never actually occurs in nature, for the various *Lloydias* are not merely rather like one another, but are actually one and the same species, as like each other (to quote our old Welsh friend Fluellin) ‘as my fingers is to my fingers.’ Now, naturalists know that such absolute identity of structure can only arise through unbroken descent from a common origin ; wherever two species are separately descended from unlike ancestors, however close their analogies may be, they are always at once marked off from one another by some very obvious points of structural dissimilarity. To put a somewhat like case in human history ; it would have been useless for anybody to argue when the Pitcairn Islanders were first discovered that they might have independently developed a language exactly similar to English ; common sense would show us at once that there could be only one English language in the world, and that the Pitcairn Islanders must really be the descendants of cast-away or runaway Englishmen. Nor can we suppose that the seeds of the *Lloydia* have been transported from one place to another by mere accident, clinging to the legs of Arctic birds, or carried unwittingly on the muddy heels of globe-trotting tourists. Such accidents do indeed occasionally occur, and they account for the

very fragmentary manner in which remote oceanic islands like the Azores or St. Helena are peopled by waifs and strays from the fauna and flora of all neighbouring continents. But it would be incredible that such an accident should have occurred over and over again in a hundred separate cases, so that every suitable place in the whole northern hemisphere should separately, by mere luck, have received a distinct colony of appropriate cold-climate plants. Incredible, I should say, even if the case of the *Lloydia* stood alone without any analogues; but in fact, as I shall try to point out by-and-by, it is only one case out of a thousand that might be quoted, for every Arctic land and every snow-clad Alpine peak is covered close up to the limit of vegetation with dozens or hundreds of similar plants, insects, and animals, which are nowhere found in all the intervening temperate or lowland regions. Clearly all these coincidences cannot be due to mere accident; we must seek for their reason in some single and common fact.

See this great rounded block of smooth granite on whose solid shoulders I am now sitting; how wonderfully grooved and polished it is, with long, deep, rounded furrows running lengthwise across its face in the same direction as the general dip of the Conway valley. What can have made those curious parallel channels on its naked surface, I wonder. Any one who has ever looked closely at the rocks about the foot of a glacier in Switzerland will recognise at once what was the agency at work on the granite slopes of Mynydd Mawr. Those are most undoubtedly ice-marks, caused by the long, slow, grinding action of the superincumbent glaciers. For of course everybody knows nowadays that there was once a time when great glacial sheets spread over the combes and glens of Snowdonia, as they spread to-day over the nants of Chamounix and the buried basin of the Mer de Glace.

Dr. Croll's calculations have shown that the astronomical conjunction necessary for the production of such a state of things must have occurred some two hundred thousand years since; and from that date down to eighty thousand years ago our planet kept presenting alternately either pole to the sun during long cycles of 10,500 years each; so that, first, the northern hemisphere enjoyed a long summer, while the southern was enveloped for a vast distance from the Antarctic Circle in a single covering sheet of ice; and then again the southern hemisphere had its lengthened spell of tropical weather, while the north was turned into one enormous Greenland down as far as the British Isles. Eighty thousand

years ago, or thereabouts, this condition of things began to change ; the climate of the north became more genial ; and ever since that date our sober planet has oscillated within gentler limits, producing only such alternate results of annual summer and winter as those with which we ourselves are now familiar.

When the glaciation was at its worst in the northern hemisphere, almost the entire surface of the European continent, from Scandinavia and Lapland, to England, Belgium, and central Germany, lay buried beneath one unbroken sheet of permanent ice. But when the conditions were a little less severe, local glaciers radiated from the chief mountain bosses of Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man, and ground these deep grooves and scratches on the worn surface of the denuded rock. At length the climate began to mend slightly ; and then the plants and animals of the Arctic zone spread uninterruptedly over the whole of northern Europe, from the limit of pack-ice to at least the southern slope of the Alps on the Italian side. Remains of these glacial animals—Arctic lemmings, musk sheep, white hares, reindeers, Alpine marmots, and snowy owls—are still found among the bone-caves and river drift of the interglacial ages in various parts of Europe, from Scandinavia to the Tuscan grottoes. At the same time we may be pretty sure that high Arctic or Alpine plants, adapted to a chilly climate, like the saxifrages, the sibbaldia, the crowberry, and the Swiss veronica, spread over all the plains and valleys of Great Britain and the neighbouring continent.

In those days, there is also good reason to believe, England and Ireland were united to one another as well as to France and Holland by a broad belt of lowland occupying what is now the bed of the two channels and the German Ocean, so that the mammoth and the cave-bear could roam uninterruptedly from the Yorkshire hills to the rock-shelters of the Dordogne, and from the bogs of Connaught to the then ice-clad summits of the Hartz and the Jura. The dark hunters of the period, who framed the rough, chipped stone hatchets of the Abbeville drift and the beautiful flint arrowheads of the southern French caves, could in like manner range without let or hindrance from Kent's Hole at Torquay to the Schwatka cavern in Moravia, and from the honeycombed cliffs of Yorkshire valleys to the limestone grottoes among the Alpine slopes. That distribution of land and water easily accounts for the dispersion of Arctic and snow-line plants or animals over all the snowy regions of northern Europe.

But as the cold began to subside, and as a warmer fauna and

flora invaded the now milder plains and valleys of central Europe, the glacial types, being less adapted to the new conditions, began to retreat northward towards the Arctic Circle, or upward towards the chilly summits of the principal mountains. Slowly, age after age, the southern plants and animals overran all the lower portions of the continent, cutting the glacial fauna and flora in two, and established themselves as far as the outlying peninsula of Britain, which still continued to form an integral part of the European mainland. After most of them had made good their foothold even in this distant region, however, the land began to sink slowly toward sea-level; and at last an arm of the sea encircled the whole of Ireland, and still later the waters of two long gulfs which now form the English Channel and the North Sea, met together by bursting through the narrow barrier of chalk between Dover and Cape Blancnez. Thus Britain finally became an island group; and, being washed on three sides by the warm current of the Gulf Stream, it acquired an unusually high and equable temperature for a district situated so far to the north and rising into so many chains of low mountains. But not all the plants and animals which inhabit the continent had had time to reach England, which has a comparatively poor fauna and flora; while still more failed to get to Ireland before the separation; for it is to this cause, probably, rather than to the active services of St. Patrick, that the Emerald Isle owes its famous immunity from reptiles and amphibians.

Even after this change, many of the Arctic plants, though now separated by wide stretches of sea or land from their nearest relatives elsewhere, managed to keep up a vigorous existence in the Scotch Highlands, the Welsh hills, and the greater summits of the Lake district. Some of them still cover vast tracts of country in the north; as, for example, the little green *sibbaldia*, a tufted Arctic trailer, whose herbage forms a chief element of the greensward in many parts of the Highlands; or the pretty eight-petalled *dryas*, which stars with its sweet white blossoms the limestone rocks of northern England and the Ulster hills. Among the more common of these isolated old glacial flowers in Britain are the Alpine meadow-rue, the northern rock-cress, the Arctic whitlow-grass, the Alpine pearlwort, the Scottish *asphodel*, the mossy *cyphel*, the mountain lady's mantle, the purple *saxifrage*, and the red bearberry. Altogether, we have still more than two hundred such Alpine or Arctic plants, stranded among our uplands or in the extreme north of Scotland, and probably separated for

many thousand years from the main body of their kind in the Arctic Circle or the snowy mountains of central Europe.

Our pretty little *Lloydia* here is far rarer in Britain than these low mountain kinds; for it has died out utterly even in Scotland itself, and now survives nowhere with us except on these solitary Welsh summits. Such cases are frequent enough in Britain; for while the moderate mountainous or Arctic species still go on thriving among the straths and corries, the coldest kinds of all have often been pushed upward and ever upward by the advancing tide of southern flowers till they are left at last only on a few isolated mountain tops, where many of them are even now in course of slowly disappearing before the steady advance of the southern types. For example, there is a certain pretty kind of heath, confined to northern or Arctic hillsides, which till lately lingered on in Britain only on the one mountain known as the Sow of Athole in Perthshire; but of late years it has grown rarer and rarer with each succeeding summer, until it is now probably quite extinct. It is the natural tendency of all such small isolated colonies, whether of plants or animals, to die slowly out; for they cannot cross freely with any of their own kind outside the narrow limits of their own restricted community; and by constantly breeding in and in with one another they at last acquire such weak and feeble constitutions that they finally dwindle away imperceptibly for want of a healthy infusion of fresh external blood.

If I mention a few other like cases (as well as I can remember them on the spur of the moment, for I cannot pretend to give a complete ex-cathedra list here on the slopes of Mynydd Mawr) it will help to elucidate the origin and nature of this little colony of mountain tulips. There is a lovely orchid, the lady's slipper, common in Siberia and Russia, almost up to the Arctic Circle, but now found with us only in one Yorkshire station, where, like the heath, it is rapidly verging to complete local extinction. Again, among one family alone, the tufted saxifrage has now been driven to the summits of Ben Avers and Ben Nevis; the drooping saxifrage is extinct everywhere in Britain save on the cloudy top of Ben Lawers; the brook saxifrage lingers on upon the same mountain, as well as on Ben Nevis and Lochnagar; and the Alpine saxifrage, though more frequent in little solitary groups in Scotland and the Lake district, has died out of all Ireland save only on the bald head of Ben Bulbin in Sligo. The Alpine sow-thistle, an Arctic and snowy weed, is now dying out with us on the tops of Lochnagar and the Clova mountains. The black bear-

berry yet haunts Ben Nevis and a few other Highland peaks. The Alpine butterwort has been driven even from the mountains in Scotland generally, but still drags on a secluded existence in a few very northern bogs of Caithness and Sutherland; in this respect it resembles the northern holy-grass, an Arctic plant, which Robert Dick, the self-taught botanist of Thurso, discovered among the high pastures near his native town. This same grass strangely reappears in New Zealand, whither it has doubtless been carried from Siberia by its seeds accidentally clinging to the feet of some belated bird; but then such a solitary case in itself shows how impossible is the explanation of the numerous Scotch and Welsh Arctic plants as due to mere chance; for while in north European mountains similar instances can be counted by hundreds, in New Zealand the coincidence is very rare and almost unparalleled.

The snowy gentian, to continue our list, turns up in a good many little Scotch colonies; but the Alpine lychnis, its companion on the mountain pastures of the Bernese Oberland, is only now known in Britain on the summit of Little Kilrannoch, a Farnshire mountain, and among the crags of Hobcartin Fell in Cumberland. The bog sandwort, everywhere a rare and dying species, has wholly disappeared from these islands except on the sides of the Widdybank Fell in Durham. Its ally the fringed sandwort loiters late on the limestone cliffs of Ben Bulbin in Sligo, as well as on one solitary serpentine hill in the island of Unst among the chilly Shetlands. A tiny peaflower, the Alpine astragalus, has been driven almost everywhere to the snow-line, but still survives in Scotland among the Clova and Braemar mountains. It is on a single spot in the same exposed Clova range, too, that the closely-related yellow oxytropes still grows in diminishing numbers; while its ally the Ural oxytrope holds its own manfully over all the dry hills of the Highlands. I could add to these instances many more; but lunch is waiting to be eaten in the knapsack, and I am loth to tire the patience of my hearers with too long a list of barren names and bare wind-swept mountain summits.

Still, I love to think that the little colony of timid shrinking *Lloydias* stranded here on the granite slopes of Mynydd Mawr can push back its pedigree in such an unbroken line to so dim and distant a prehistoric past. Ever since the glaciers last cleared away from this boss of smooth stone on whose broad back we are sitting, a tiny group of our pretty mountain tulips has continuously

occupied age after age this self-same spot. Originally, no doubt, they covered the whole sides of the mountains and stretched down far into the plains and valleys; but gradually, as the world's weather grew warmer, they were restricted, first, to the mountain tracts of Wales and Scotland, then to a small Snowdonian district, and, finally, even within that shrunken realm to two or three isolated peaks. Occasionally, I suppose, a seed from one of the three existing Welsh colonies may be carried by accident into the territory of the others; but it is in the highest degree improbable that the stock has ever been reinforced for the last fifty thousand years from any purely external body of its congeners in the higher Alps or in the Arctic regions. The dark small men of the Neolithic age, the Aryan Celts of the bronze period, the conquering Roman from the south, the Englishman, the Scandinavian, the Norman, all have since come, and most of them have gone again; but the *Lloydias* still hold precarious possession of their solitary remaining strongholds. An analogy from the animal world will help to bring out the full strangeness of this extraordinary isolation. Mount Washington in New Hampshire is the highest peak among the beautiful tumbled range of the White Mountains. On and near its summit a small community of butterflies belonging to an old Glacial and Arctic species still lingers over a very small area, where it has held its own for the eighty thousand years that have elapsed since the termination of the great ice age. The actual summit of the mountain rises to a height of 6,293 feet; and the butterflies do not range lower than the five thousand feet line—as though they were confined on Snowdon to a district between the Ordnance cairn and the level of the little slumbering tarn of Glaslyn. Again, from Mount Washington to Long's Peak in Colorado, the distance amounts to 1,800 miles; while from the White Mountains to Hopedale in Labrador, where the same butterflies first reappear, makes a bee-line of fully a thousand miles. In the intervening districts there are no insects of the same species. Hence we must conclude that the few butterflies left behind by the retreating main-guard of their race on that one New Hampshire peak have gone on for thousands and thousands of years, producing eggs and growing from caterpillars into full-fledged insects, without once effecting a cross with the remainder of their congeners among the snows of the Rocky Mountains or in the chilly plains of sub-Arctic America. So far as they themselves know, they are the only representatives of their kind now remaining on the whole earth, left behind like

the ark on Ararat amid the helpless ruins of an antediluvian world. Well, what these Mount Washington butterflies are among insects, that are our pretty wild tulips here among English flowers. They remain to us as isolated relics of an order that has long passed away; and they help us to rebuild with fuller certainty the strange half-undeciphered history of the years that were dead and gone long before written books had yet begun to be.

GRANT ALLEN.

Lord Richard and I.

CHAPTER I.

AMONG the characters which I have found worthy of study, that of Lord Richard stands pre-eminent. No other man has so successfully deceived the world. The instinct of woman and the analysis of man have been equally at fault. His many friends, male and female, love him for his frankness and geniality; his political colleagues regard him in spite of his admitted sagacity as a very simple fellow. He is raised on a pedestal as The Honest Man, who sees clearly enough, but whose chief claim to admiration is that he is incapable of deceit, almost incapable of concealment. It may be that there are such guileless men in the world, and that they are not simpletons. I will not be dogmatic on this matter. I will content myself with the assertion that Lord Richard, whom the world took for this combination of open simplicity and political sagacity, was a master of dissimulation, the most wily and subtle of men.

Even now I can recall my first impression of my friend's simplicity—an impression so strong that but for my invariable rule I should have trusted it. As I summon back to me his square figure, his blunt speech, his open eyes turned to mine with an air of innocent wonder, his easy talk of things political, I am almost surprised that I too was not deceived. By a constant effort I succeeded in reserving my judgment; I was rewarded by the gradual discovery of a most intricate and interesting character; I found him out. I was almost frightened by my unique success. I had to take the greatest pains lest he should discover that I knew his real nature; and in spite of all my care I soon found that he felt an occasional uneasiness in my presence. I suspected this uneasiness, and I cautiously confirmed my suspicion by a few experiments. How happy he was in his inimitable air of innocence! He would look at me with an expression almost infantine, as he pushed his thick hair from his brow; he would seem to be puzzled by my constant presence; he started sometimes when he found me at his elbow. 'Hang it!' he would say in his simple, hearty

fashion—‘Hang it! What are you creeping about here for?’ Then I would make some jesting answer, as if I entered into his frank humour. I remember that one day, when I explained my presence by reminding him that I was his secretary, he burst into that jolly laugh which had deceived the nation. ‘I’ll be hanged,’ he cried out as soon as he could speak for laughter, ‘I’ll be hanged if I know how you came to be my secretary.’ I only answered with a smile. It was unnecessary for me to inform Lord Richard that I had attached myself to him in obedience to the advice of my dear old tutor at the University, because I considered him the most rising politician of the day. I knew well enough that to give him information was to carry coals to Newcastle; that he knew all which he cared to know. He had an admirable manner.

I may say without vanity that I was an excellent secretary. I was constant in attendance, ready with my pen, patient in investigation. An apparent carelessness about his correspondence was in agreement with Lord Richard’s attitude. As he seemed frank and guileless in speech, so also did he seem indifferent who might read the many letters which he left open on his tables. Of course I was not deceived. He knew well enough what to leave open. Yet in spite of all his cleverness I learned something more than he meant me to. By extraordinary patience and vigilance I succeeded in picking up many scraps of the secret history of contemporary politics. I kept a note-book; I copied many bits of letters; I wrote down many fragments of conversation. Little by little I obtained some valuable knowledge of the hidden mechanism of politics. I already felt at times as if my hand was on the wires. I had made up my mind to go in heart and soul—if I may use the expression—for a political career; and every day I had more and more reason to congratulate myself on my choice of my friend Lord Richard as the first step on the upward path. If ambition be a crime, I plead guilty.

I confess that I was surprised one morning, when my friend invited me to walk with him in the Park. He was generally careful to avoid asking for my society. Doubtless he kept in mind the fact that it might suit him some day to assert that he was under no obligation to me. However on this fateful morning his habitual air of frank geniality came so near to jollity, that my suspicions were immediately aroused. He would not attend to his work; he had an air almost boyish. Of course he was not a boy, though he is still regarded, especially in the political world, as a young man. These sprigs of nobility get such a start in life,

that any one of them with a quarter of my friend's ability might be a rising statesman at an age when men like myself have barely got a foot on the lowest rung of the ladder. But though Lord Richard was not more than five or six and thirty, he had no right to look so young as he looked on that eventful day. He assumed the most tempestuous spirits. 'Come out,' he said, 'and see the sun, and the smart people in the Park.' He cultivated this habit of speaking of smart people; he liked to talk as if he were a rough-and-ready son of the soil; even trifles such as these went to the increase of his popularity. 'Come and look at the swells,' he said; 'and tell me all the harm you know of every one of them; then you'll be happy.' I laughed at his pleasantry; I did not refuse to go with him; indeed I was not unnaturally pleased to be seen with Lord Richard in the Park.

My pleasure was short-lived. In the very centre of the gay crowd, while I was leaning on my friend's arm and regarding the lovely ladies with respectful interest, my eyes suddenly encountered those of my cousin Tom. It was impossible to pretend not to see him. Lady Raeborough and a few of the choicest ornaments of London society were passing between us at the moment; but this did not prevent Tom from hailing me with enthusiasm by a ridiculous name, which had been given me by my schoolfellows. I have always disliked this silly schoolboy trick of giving nicknames. I could see that the fair Countess smiled, and Lord Richard began, as usual, to laugh aloud. Such want of tact as Tom's is scarcely less than criminal. My cousin's hat was shabby, and his clothes dusty, but his face beamed with its usual unreasonable satisfaction. Tom is not wholly a humbug; I really believe that the company in which he saw me was not the sole cause of the warmth of his greeting; he is strangely impulsive, and has a most absurd feeling for kin. Even the chagrin, which at the moment I could not wholly conceal, did not moderate his ardour. It was only natural that I should be pained to see him there and then. Indeed, I did not care to see him anywhere. He was only my father's cousin, and I had never approved of him. He was a shiftless man, and by no means a successful one; he had let slip some admirable chances of bettering his position; he had defended his folly by a parade of scruples, which were old-fashioned and fantastic. Indeed, there was in Tom much which called for the gravest disapproval. Judge if I was pleased to be greeted in the most brilliant crowd of the world by this elderly and shabby journalist!

As I was hurriedly asking the necessary questions about his wife and family, and at the same time forming in my mind a picturesque account of this eccentric cousin, which I could give to my friend, Lord Richard surprised me by resisting my attempts to draw him away. He is far more solid than I; he detained me easily. 'Introduce me,' he said in a loud whisper. I introduced him wondering; but the next moment I perceived his motive; I felt sure that he recognised in Tom one of the gentlemen of the press. Nobody knew better than Lord Richard the value of politeness to journalists. It was strange to hear these two men talk at first acquaintance with a manner as if neither had a thought to conceal. As for Tom I really believe that he hides very little. Clever and accomplished as he is, I have sometimes thought him little short of an idiot. He did not seem in the least degree overcome when Lord Richard pressed him to visit him. 'I shall be delighted,' he said; 'and I can look up my young cousin here at the same time; he's often with you, I believe.' 'By George, he is!' said my friend; 'he's closer than a brother;' and he burst out laughing again. As we proceeded on our way, I heard him murmuring to himself that silly name which had been given me at school. It was too ridiculous in a man of Lord Richard's position.

When we had walked a little way without further conversation, my companion asked with a suddenness which was, without doubt, the result of calculation—

'Was that your cousin's daughter?'

Nothing escapes Lord Richard. I had hoped that he had not noticed Delia, where she stood half withdrawn at her father's shabby elbow. I myself had detected her in a moment, and had noticed with a strange emotion that the pretty child was changing to a pretty woman. Ah me, for the follies of boyhood! How I remembered our games, when we were children together, in my cousin's old garden! 'Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur!' But no time had been given me now for wandering thoughts and tender reminiscences. When I saw Delia in the crowd, I had decided in an instant that I could pretend not to see her. It was far better that I should ignore her. It was no less than my duty. When Delia was a little girl, with floating hair and grave blue eyes, I had promised a thousand times in jest that she should be my wife; I had been strangely drawn towards the lovely child. One cannot be too careful. I had left all that so far behind me; fortune had carried me away from that youthful silly dream. As out of the

corner of my eye I marked her standing there very neat and pretty in her simple gown ; as I noted that the charm had grown with her growth, and that she had inherited none of her father's untidy air, I felt that for her sake, as well as for my own, I had better see her as little as possible. On this occasion I had been able not to see her at all.

'Was that his daughter?' asked Lord Richard. For a moment I knew not how to reply. I could not acknowledge that I had seen my little cousin, and had not spoken to her. 'Was there a girl with him?' I asked in return. 'There was,' he answered with a sort of mockery in his voice ; and in a moment he added, 'By George ! Is it possible that she and you are cousins ?' 'Only second-cousins,' I said. 'I hope she may remember you in her prayers,' he said strangely. Then he seemed to forget my existence. I did not interrupt him ; I supposed that he was busy with the intricacies of diplomacy. I moved quietly at his elbow, till I heard him humming to himself. I listened, but I could not catch the words ; I made out, however, that he was humming a German song. I more than once detected the word 'augen,' which on consulting the dictionary at home I discovered to signify 'eyes.'

CHAPTER II.

NOT long after the unfortunate meeting in the Park, Lord Richard suddenly spoke to me of the neglected borough of Mudbro'. I knew that there was likely to be a vacancy there ; I had been waiting for a good opportunity of insinuating my own merits as a candidate ; but I had never expected that the first suggestion of my standing for Parliament would come from my friend. Of course I was well aware that the influence of Lord Richard's family in Mudbro' was practically decisive. If the present member were really bent on retirement, and if the family supported me cordially, I might leap in a moment into that position to which I had long intended to climb. But my friend's unsought suggestion frightened me. What could be his object ? I could not guess. I could only assume a proper modesty—a doubt of my own worthiness. 'Surely,' I said, 'you must know of some more important person.'

'You'll do capitally,' he cried out with his big voice ; 'you're

made for politics; you don't mind working up details; you're good at ferreting out things; you're not thin-skinned.'

I laughed in a deprecating manner at his praise; but still my mind was busy with questions of his motive. I began to think that he wished to loosen the cords which bound us to one another. It seemed probable enough that with his great acuteness he had decided that I was learning too much of himself and of his correspondence with political friends. Of his real motive for banishing me, I confess that I had not the slightest suspicion. As I looked at him doubtfully, he began to laugh, as usual. This habit of laughter, which while it covers awkward pauses commits a man to nothing, is of great use to Lord Richard. He arranged for my immediate departure, as if it were the best joke in the world. He planned interviews for me with the sitting member, with the local lawyer, with his own distinguished father. The fact that I was to be a guest in that famous family mansion naturally weakened my instinctive opposition to these sudden schemes. Finally my friend begged me not to hurry back. I hastened to assure him that I should make no unnecessary delay; and that, if I were ever fortunate enough to gain a seat in The House, even that need not prevent me from making myself useful to him. 'I could still act as secretary,' I said. 'No, no, no—damn it, no!' he cried, and hurried out of the room. I laughed at the joke, but I was still disquieted by doubts. How true my instinct was has yet to be shown.

Alas! I lingered at Mudbro'. The cordiality of the amiable if inefficient member for the borough, the stupidity of the principal constituents, the luxury of the Castle in which I was a guest—all these combined to prolong my absence from my friend. Slowly and happily I was winning my way into popular favour; day by day in the leisurely life of that quiet spot I was confirming my position as its future representative; when on a sudden I was awakened from my placidity by the news of the great catastrophe. It was in the library of his ancestral home that I opened the paper with no presentiment, and read that Lord Richard had been blinded by a flash of lightning. I could scarcely believe my eyes. Such was my faith in the man's craft and power, that I could scarcely imagine him the victim of an accident. I found it hard to believe that anything had happened to him which was not the result of his own calculations. Even when I had realised the dreadful truth, I had no suspicion of the extent of the misfortune which had befallen

me. Indeed I saw good in the evil. I saw that Lord Richard's blindness would make him doubly dependent on my care and help. Although I noted—as it is my habit to note details apparently unimportant—that, when Lord Richard met with his terrible accident, he was driving himself home from the suburb in which my cousin Tom lived, I confess that I attached no importance to the fact. It was not for the sake of playing with lightning that my friend had planned my absence in his native borough.

I did not waste time in idle lamentation; I left that to the victim's kinsfolk at the Castle. Now was the time for me to hurry to Lord Richard's side. No one knew better than I what is expected from a friend: I had studied the subject. After all proper expressions of condolence I hurried from the noble mansion, where I had passed such happy hours.

As soon as I reached London I hurried to my friend's abode. I let myself in by means of one of his latch-keys which I always carried. I stepped noiselessly upstairs; I did not know in what condition the nerves of the poor sufferer might be. At the top of the stairs I turned aside into the little back-room; I peeped cautiously round the heavy curtain, which hung across the open doorway; I feared that my sudden appearance might startle the invalid. As I peered cautiously into the shaded study, I was reassured by the sound of my friend's voice. He was speaking in his usual tone, with that blunt straightforward manner which I envied. For a moment I thought that the whole story must be false; I drew back my head, that I might consider my position. Then it struck me that he might be exaggerating his misfortune—pretending to be wholly blind, that he might excite to the highest point the popular interest and sympathy. In this I did him more than credit.

I waited in silence to discover to whom my friend was talking. Presently I heard the voice of my cousin Tom; and I felt sure (I confess my ill-founded certainty) that I understood the meaning of the situation. How soon, I said to myself, has he found a use for the confidential journalist to whom I introduced him! I felt no doubt (I confess it) that he was arranging with Tom how the story should be told in the metropolitan, and in the provincial press; how England might be made to thrill from one end to the other by an account of this sudden catastrophe, which had befallen a rising public servant, and of the truly British pluck with which the awful consequences were borne. Intense curiosity nailed me to the spot. I had no time to think of the peculiarity

of my position, as I listened with all my ears behind the heavy curtain. Even if I had tried to make my presence known, the words, which presently reached me, would have stricken me dumb. 'It seems impossible,' said Tom—'My little Delia!' What was this? I gave such a gasp, that I thought it must be heard. Could it be a sort of cypher used by these two men, lest there should be eavesdroppers? No! The idea was absurd. How could there be fear of eavesdroppers in Lord Richard's private rooms? As the talk went on, all doubt was speedily removed. I stood spellbound; I could not utter a sound; it was impossible for me to make my presence known.

After a silence, which seemed long, Lord Richard spoke. 'It seems almost impossible to me,' he said. 'I thought that I did not care a jot for all the women in the world. I was rather badly treated by a woman, once, when I was a boy. After that I made up my mind to do without sentiment; I went in for politics; I thought I was strong as a house—and it has come to this.' There was something both comical and pathetic in my friend's voice. I could not think what he meant by this strange departure; I did not try to think; all my mind was given to noting his every word, to impressing it on my memory. My report is absolutely accurate. My cousin Tom muttered some words, which did not reach my ears; and then Lord Richard began again speaking slowly and low, as if he were thinking aloud. 'Sometimes of late,' he said, 'I had caught myself in a strange mood, wondering if I had not flung away the fairest gift of life, if it would not be sad to grow old with no one near me—no one to care for me much—no one but some fellow who served me for his own interest, climbed on my shoulders, and would kick me down when I could help him no higher.' How morbid a line of thought was this into which Lord Richard pretended to have fallen! Surely he could always command better service than this, which he foreshadowed for the softening of my cousin Tom. It struck me as overdone.

'I never felt so strange,' my friend continued presently with the same musing tone, 'as I did that morning, when I met you in the Park. If I were superstitious—and perhaps I am—I should say that I knew I was to meet my fate. My heart was beating like a boy's, as I found myself in that crowd. As I spoke to you, I saw blue eyes look at me with an innocent curiosity; I saw — as I shall never see again.'

There was so strange a silence that I could not help peeping round the curtain. I felt that I must know all, that I was in some

sort bound to understand the whole situation. When I peeped into the darkened room, I saw that my friend had assumed a striking pose. His head was bowed, and his arms, which lay straight along the arms of the chair, conveyed for the moment a suggestion of hopelessness. The whole attitude was an effective appeal for pity. Of course it produced the expected effect on Tom. I could see that my cousin was nervous and excited. His features were twisted into most comical expressions, and his eyes were wandering to the corners of the ceiling. He started spasmodically when Lord Richard referred to his blindness; he put out his hand with a jerk as if he would seize the other's; he only grasped the empty air; then with his usual talent for doing the wrong thing he began to whistle; then he stopped abruptly. 'I'm awfully sorry,' he said suddenly, with a voice which seemed to crack in the middle like a half-grown boy's. Lord Richard pulled himself up in his chair, and felt in his new darkness for the other's hand. It was odd to see this new movement in him, so unlike the old prompt use of the arms. The two men went through the form of shaking hands—apparently for no reason.

'When I saw her again,' said my friend presently, 'in that charming house of yours, she seemed to me like a little tidy angel, with all her heart for home, but—but with heaven in her eyes.' As he spoke, I seemed to see that extraordinary suburban dwelling, which I had known so well in my boyhood—a ramshackle collection of sheds and boxes, all opening into an untidy garden. To call that 'a charming house'! To call my pretty little cousin 'an angel'! As for that passage about her heart and eyes, I could only admire the speaker with a new wonder; even I had not suspected his power of improvising that sort of speech.

'I was frightened,' he said after another pause, 'by the full consciousness of her divine childhood. I felt myself old and worldly—unworthy even to think of her. I came away that evening with the fixed purpose of crushing this mad fancy of mine. I was confident, and—and it has come to this.'

'It was awful,' said Tom; 'it seems to me impossible now; I can't believe that you—that you——'

'That I am blind, or that I am in love?' asked Lord Richard, and he laughed out loud with his old boldness. 'The blindness I can stand well enough,' he said without a tremor in his voice. 'It's a bore for my friends—I shall victimise you all—and for my political colleagues—poor devils! But it's this other thing—it's this other thing which makes me tremble like a girl. I could

have crushed it, but I cannot crush it now. Now in the darkness I see her eyes always; I can't escape; I can't fix my mind on the business of the session; I feel my weakness every moment. I shall take up my public life again; I shall do my work with secretaries and such like necessities—but I can't face my long life at home alone. I can't do it. I've an odd fancy that heaven has taken my eyes, that I should learn the meaning of those eyes of hers. I—I feel a fool—will you give her to me?’

‘You ask a great deal,’ cried Tom almost angrily. ‘Poor little Delia! I don't want her to marry and go away from me; she's a child; I'd much rather she married a boy—a nice innocent boy with his way to make in the world; I don't like her going among people who would hold her cheap; you must see that it would be a grave responsibility for her; it would be a hard life to look after a—ah! I beg your pardon.’

‘Of course it would,’ said the other; ‘I ought to be led about by a little dog, like the rest of 'em.’ He laughed as he spoke; but Tom seemed to be touched none the less; he fidgeted and coughed, and begged his pardon again. I have written down more than enough of this talk. In the end they agreed that Lord Richard should visit my cousin's strange abode as often as he liked; that he should try to make himself at home there; that he should be allowed to talk to Delia when he would. Meanwhile neither of them was to give the girl even a hint of Lord Richard's wishes. As they gradually came to an agreement, Tom became more cheerful. He did not conceal his hopes that the absurdity of the whole thing would become clear to my friend. ‘See her as often as you like!’ he said at last. ‘See her!’ repeated Lord Richard softly. ‘Ah!’ cried the other again sharply, as if something hurt him, ‘what a fool I am! Forgive me, and come as often as you can—and thank you.’ I do not know why he thanked him, but he spoke with deepest feeling. Tom is a strange being. It is my deliberate opinion that he was not in any sense eager that his daughter should marry Lord Richard. I believe that his want of enthusiasm in contemplating this brilliant future for his child was real. He is fantastic. If I wished to speak hardly of my own kin, I should say that he was little short of an idiot.

CHAPTER III.

THOUGH I freely confess that I was astounded by the discovery of my friend's new purpose, it needed but a few minutes' solitude to make his motives clear. After a few minutes of perplexity I again did justice to his extraordinary ability. I had found out long ago that story of his youth. I had made the acquaintance of the lady who had treated him badly. I had smiled often to myself at the thought of her chagrin; for the gallant boy whom she had thrown over was becoming a personage in the world, and the rich man whom she had married was unexpectedly chary of diamonds and ponies. Now if Lord Richard in his riper manhood made up his mind at last to take a wife, it was certainly wise of him to seek one who was naturally modest, and who had been brought up to expect little for herself, and to look after the younger children. The care and devotion of such a girl might be bought by corals as easily as by diamonds. But of course no considerations of the sort would have occurred to my friend, had he not met with his great calamity. That much he had admitted, though with a graceful veil of sentiment, in his conversation with my cousin Tom. If to see clearly what is for one's good, and to lay firm hand upon it, be to be great, then my friend Lord Richard is a great man. A lightning flash strikes him blind; in a moment he has fixed upon the best substitute for his eyes; within twenty-four hours he has put everything in motion to ensure his success. What would be the value to him now of a fashionable woman with a heart given wholly to society, and with eyes for other men? He proposed to secure for himself a dear little modest maiden, who would ask no better fate than to devote herself to a great man and a member of the aristocracy. One mistake, however, even Lord Richard made. Even he must have overrated her gentleness. I confess that I overrated it. I have been rudely corrected. But—as the professional romancers say—to my story!

For some time after Lord Richard's sad accident I was assiduous in my attentions. Not only did his comparative helplessness and the claims of friendship make an appeal which I would not ignore for a moment; but I was eager also to see the conclusion of this little comedy—this skilfully managed idyll of the middle-aged statesman and the guileless suburban maiden. Moreover, I had my own part to play. I had determined at once to do all I could to further the marriage. It was the safest course. Even

now, though the result has not agreed with my expectations, I cannot see that I was wrong. If I had tried to hinder the match for the sake of my own influence with my friend, I should probably have failed; I knew Lord Richard's power. Even if I had succeeded in separating the ill-assorted couple, I could not have done it without creating such a coldness between my friend and myself, that our old familiar and delightful converse would have been impossible. How familiar—how easy it was! 'What would you do without me?' I asked jocosely one day, when I had written a handful of notes from his dictation and addressed them to his political friends; and I remember exactly the quick movement with which he turned his sightless face towards me and cried out, with laughter, 'Upon my soul I should miss you; you are good for the nerves; I've almost got over jumping when I hear you suddenly at my shoulder.' But I must not linger over irrelevant reminiscences; it is one of the temptations to which my abnormally accurate memory lays me open; I must come to the climax of my little story.

In pursuance of my plan I prepared myself to accompany my friend almost every day to that riverside suburb where my cousin Tom presided over his caravanserai; but here I was unexpectedly foiled. I soon found that on this road at least it was not I, but his faithful valet, who was to play little dog to the blind man. I have nothing to say against Lord Richard's excellent valet; I never saw him drunk; it was his interest to preserve an excellent place. Still it is only fair to conclude that, like most of his class, he was prying and inquisitive. Certainly he was no fit companion on a sentimental pilgrimage. When my offers of attendance had been many times refused, I saw that I was wasting my time. But I could not abandon my design. I must appear to Delia as an important agent in the business, or where would be my claim on her gratitude? I must see her, or how could I insinuate that she owed Lord Richard's attentions to my diplomatic management? I was determined to impress this view of myself upon my pretty cousin's mind. I made up my mind to see her without delay. Since my friend refused my arm as a guide to the presence of his beloved, I must go to her alone. It was certainly more difficult. I had allowed so long a time to elapse since my last visit to that tumble-down abode, where I spent so many happy days of boyhood, that I feared an attack of natural, and not unpardonable, shyness, when I knocked anew at that well-known but shabby door. However I trusted to that tact which had never failed me yet.

Fate seemed to be against me. I made three journeys to my cousin's house at different hours of the day; and three times was I refused admittance. I began to think—incredible as it appeared—that the young woman who had charge of the door had been ordered never to admit me. One day, being in a holiday humour, I determined to play my good cousins a trick. I felt that our old familiarity fully warranted so harmless a joke. I engaged a young waterman to scull me up with the tide; I left the boat at the end of the lane which passes Tom's door; and, coming to the corner of the garden in a shady place, I mounted an old rickety iron railing and looked cautiously over the wall. A lofty row of sweet-peas was between me and the house. Smiling at the pleasant trick, which reminded me of boyish days in that happy garden, I slipped softly over the wall and dropped noiselessly down to the grass. The little garden was comically old-fashioned, and by no means well-kept. Through the tangled wilderness of sweets I slipped like a serpent; I remembered how I used to play at being a red Indian among those green paths and hedges. I just stopped myself in time. Two people were sitting on an old seat. Though one of them was blind, I knew the quickness of his ear; I held my breath, and crouched low in the tangled grass. Every word—every gesture remains engraven on my memory. I could not have moved to save my life. I was—as the novelists say—rooted to the spot. Luckily it was a spot whence through a tiny peephole in the yew hedge I could command a perfect view of the faces of the actors.

Lord Richard and my little cousin Delia were seated side by side on the old stone seat, which looked as if it might have come in its old age from the shadow of ilex trees in a villa garden of Rome. Even then the charm of the place and of the hour was not lost on me. But, in a moment, all my mind was busy with the strange pair before me. The first thing to be noted was the air of well-tryed friendship which was common to the man of the world and to the young girl. They might have been friends for years. Delia was prattling like a child, as if she would amuse her companion; and yet with this childishness there was a little air of protection, almost motherly, which was comical enough. She seemed to have taken charge of him. She went on talking, until it struck me that she was half afraid to stop—afraid of what he might say in his turn. He for his part seemed in no hurry to speak. He sat with his face turned straight to the place where I lay (I could scarcely assure myself that he at least could not see me),

and he listened to his pretty little comrade with that broad smile of contentment, which was worth a king's ransom for its persuasion of simplicity. At last it seemed as if she could think of no more to say. She was silent, but the blush on her cheek grew deeper; she looked at him once or twice quickly, and as often turned away her face as if she forgot that he could not see the pretty trouble in her lips and eyes. I had never seen my little cousin look so pretty: Ah! boyish fancies! Ah! memories of foolish childhood! What says the satirist? 'Wait till you come to forty year.' Lying there in the grass, I remembered how I had tried to kiss Delia when I came home one summer day from school, and how, in her pretty wilfulness, she had boxed my ears with that little sun-brown hand. How pretty she looked as she sat on that old, gray, moss-stained seat! There was suppressed excitement in her face, and a look in her eyes as if she was not far from tears. She must have known how pretty she looked; probably some of the trouble in her face was due to the sad thought that this prettiness was wasted on the eligible suitor at her side.

There was a pause; I seemed to hear the tiny insects in the air—almost to hear the beating of my heart. At last Delia moved, as if she could bear the silence no longer. He put out his hand with its new uncertain movement, and laid it on hers; and yet he did not speak. At last with a great sigh, 'How I love you!' he said. It was splendidly done; it was supremely effective. He must have felt the trembling of her hand, for he took his own great hand away, and laid it for a minute across his sightless eyes. 'I ought not to have said it. I ought not to have dreamed it. I ought not to have dreamed of laying this burden'—and here he stopped short, as if something hindered his speech. It is an old, but an excellent effect. She said nothing; but her little hand came trembling to his, which had fallen limp upon his knee. There was a light of pity in her face, which made it like an angel's. If he had been a rosy Cupidon, and she a Psyche newly awakened by love, she could not have looked more perfectly as if she doted on him. It was supremely feminine. No man could have thrown himself so utterly into the situation. At her touch, Lord Richard turned to look at her, and in an instant a cry came from him sharply—'Ah, God! I cannot see her!' he cried. And now I could see that her eyes were full of tears; she bent her little brown head and kissed his big hand, and her tears fell on it. Then his face flushed with triumph: he had gained his end. He put out his arm towards her, where

she was half withdrawn ; and when he touched her soft brown hair, he drew her head against his stalwart shoulder. I was too late, and I knew it ; they had played the little comedy without me.

It was an unlucky day for me. 'What are you doing there?' I heard the fierce whisper close above my head, and a nervous hand was on my collar dragging me backward. It was Tom. It was an awkward situation. I had neither time nor breath for explanation. I returned to London full of melancholy thoughts.

I have forgiven both my friend and my cousin. What is the use of resentment? Lord Richard did not withdraw from me his political patronage. To his influence and that of his family I owed my seat for Mudbro'. As a public man I was worth propitiating in the eyes of my friend. I may add that I have done no discredit to his choice. I flung myself with all my energy, if I may use the expression, into the strife of parties. By my own efforts and by a dexterous use of machinery of which I confess myself proud, I have gained for myself a place in which I am independent of all aristocratic patronage. I have made myself a free man, and, moreover, a rising one.

It is as a private individual that I cannot but regard my friend and my friend's wife with a gentle regret, though without animosity. With neither Lord Richard nor Delia could I preserve a pleasant intercourse. It was no fault of mine ; I was eager to be on the footing of a cousin in the house ; but all my efforts to be cousinly were vain. The husband indeed received me with laughter—almost with roars of laughter ; but the wife was so cold, that at last I could not ignore her show of disfavour. This little lady, whom we had all thought so soft, was cold and hard as steel. I did not grudge her the victory which she had won. She had played her cards well. She was quite right to secure a husband whose blindness was more than compensated for by his high position and comparative wealth. If she could have been made to think that she owed her prize to me, things would have been different between us. As it was, if I were a vain man, I could not but attribute the attitude of hostility which she preserved towards me to some lurking resentment at the ease with which I had stifled my boyish fancy for her. The strange prejudices of women are often to be explained by pique.

Of my cousin Tom—heaven help him !—I have seen little. I met him once not long after the marriage ; and as he spoke to me of the happiness of his little girl I saw real tears in his eyes. As I

believe that he was originally by no means eager for the match, so too do I believe that he now regards it with the warmest sympathy as a love match on both sides. I could almost envy my cousin's unique simplicity. Poor Tom!

JULIAN STURGE.

Sir Hilary's Prayer.

IN the December number of the Magazine Mr. Sidney Whiteford offered, as a probable solution of this well-known enigma by W. M. Praed, the words 'Adieu,' or 'Aide Dieu.' The Editor has received many alternative solutions of greater or less ingenuity, though possibly none of them are on the whole so satisfactory as Mr. Whiteford's. The words of the enigma are as follow:—

I.

Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt;
Sooth, 'twas an awful day!
And tho' in that old age of sport
The rufflers of the camp and court
Had little time to pray,
'Tis said Sir Hilary muttered there
Two syllables by way of prayer.

II.

'My first to all the brave and proud
Who see to-morrow's sun;
My next, with her cold and quiet cloud,
To those who find their dewy shroud
Before to-day's be done;
And both together to all blue eyes
That weep when a warrior nobly dies.'

The most favourite solution appears to be 'Restrain,' which is sent by four correspondents. Those who favour this solution quote in support of their theory the old saw, 'Happy is the bride that the sun shines on, and happy is the corpse that the rain rains on.' It seems, however, unlikely that Sir Hilary would have used the word 'Restrain' or the words 'Reest Rain' even 'by way of prayer.' The same objection applies to 'Heart Ease,' which is offered from two quarters; to 'Pension,' 'Good Night,' 'Farewell,' and 'Good E'en.' 'Bonne Grace,' 'Help Heaven,' and 'Prie Dieu' are also advocated, but it is doubtful whether any of these will be accepted as final.—EDITOR.

Ballade of the Happy Hunting Grounds.

THERE *is* a Heaven, or here, or there,—
 A Heaven there is, for me and you,
 Where bargains meet for purses spare,
 Like ours, are not so far and few.
 Thuanus' bees go humming through
 The learned groves, 'neath rainless skies,
 O'er volumes old and volumes new,
 Within that Book-man's Paradise!

There treasures bound for Longepierre
 Keep brilliant their morocco blue,
 There Hookes' *Amanda* is not rare,
 Nor early tracts upon Peru!
 Racine is common as Rotrou,
 No Shakespeare Quarto search defies,
 And Caxtons grow as blossoms grew,
 Within that Book-man's Paradise!

There's Eve,—not our first mother fair,—
 But Clovis Eve, a binder true;
 Thither does Bauzonnet repair,
 Derome, Le Gascon, Padeloup!
 But never come the cropping crew,
 That dock a volume's honest size,
 Nor they that 'letter' backs askew,
 Within that Book-man's Paradise!

ENVOY.

Friend, do not Heber and De Thou,
 And Scott, and Southey, kind and wise,
La chasse au bouquin still pursue
 Within that Book-man's Paradise?

A. LANG.

My Books.

THEY dwell in the odour of camphor,
 They stand in a Sherraton shrine,
 They are 'warranted early editions,'
 These worshipful books of mine ;—

In their cream-coloured 'Oxford vellum,'
 In their redolent 'crushed Levant,'
 With their delicate 'watered linings,'
 They are jewels of price, I grant ;—

'Blind-tooled' and 'morocco-jointed,'
 They have Zaehnsdorf's daintiest dress,
 They are graceful, attenuate, polished,
 But they gather the dust, no less :—

For the row that I prize is yonder,
 Away on the unglazed shelves,
 The bulged and the bruised *octavos*,
 The dear and the dumpy twelves,—

Montaigne with his sheepskin blistered,
 And Howell the worse for wear,
 And the worm-drilled Jesuits' Horace,
 And the little old cropped Molière,—

And the Burton I bought for fourpence,
 And the Rabelais foxed and flea'd,—
 For the others I never have opened,
 But those are the ones I read.

The Photographic Eyes of Science.

TO our island home in the limitless ocean of space come waves from millions of light-sources, telling us of the orbs from which they have travelled. To the ordinary senses, or rather to that one sense which alone (with a single and partial exception¹) they affect, they bring news sufficiently impressive, if rightly understood. To the poet of old, who could judge only by what his eyes showed him, the starlit heavens, the moon walking in brightness, the sun rejoicing as a giant to run his course, the planets, which

Seemed to move,
Carrying through ether in perpetual round
Decrees and resolutions of the gods,

stood first among the wonders and the mysteries of nature. ‘The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament sheweth his handy-work,’ was no vain saying, even among men who could know but a small part of the real significance of the scene displayed to their view. For to them the stars were but bright points of light, not suns as they are to us; the sun and moon were but two lamps moving athwart the sky for the benefit of earth, the greater light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night; and the strange movements of the planets as they pursue

Their wandering course—now high, now low, then hid—
Progressive, retrograde, and standing still,

had no meaning save in relation to this small earth.

With the invention of the telescope came discoveries which at once gave an entirely new meaning to the celestial scenery. The waves which come from each orb in space, to fall in ordinary course upon that small surface through which light passes to tell its message from without, were now gathered on a larger surface, yet brought, after being so gathered, into the same visual knowledge-field, there to tell of greater wonders than the eye of man had yet

¹ The sun, which, besides the sense of sight, affects the sense of touch.

seen, or even than it had been given to the mind of man to conceive. For note that before such inventions as have revealed the feebleness of our own unaided senses, men naturally regarded what they saw and heard and felt as all that is; whereas now that stars and suns outside our range of vision have been brought into our ken, there is no limit to the range of our conceptions. We feel that what we now know of the wonders of the star depths may be as utterly insignificant compared with what *is*, as is the starscape seen and estimated by the eye compared with the galaxy revealed by the great Herschelians gauging telescopes.

Nor was it less in what it interpreted than in what it showed that the telescope widened men's conceptions of the universe. It showed the planets as worlds—some greater, some less, than our earth—but all much vaster than the earth as she had been regarded in ancient times. If it did not actually reveal the stars as suns, it taught men very plainly that they are so. The scale of the visible universe was widened enormously at the very time when the visible universe was shown to be but the minutest corner of the real universe.

Yet what the telescope has taught men has been really taught through the eye; only what has been actually seen by telescopic observers can be regarded as so much added to our knowledge. And even that far wider expansion of our knowledge arising from legitimate inference has been attained only by a process of sampling carried on by the eye,—though with its powers increased and in a sense multiplied.

Now the eye is an organ which does certain work in a certain way, which possesses certain powers and certain weaknesses. The telescope may increase its powers in some ways, but in others it cannot help the organ to which it is but an adjunct. For instance, whether with or without telescopic aid the eye requires a certain time to receive and dispose of an impression. It may receive an impression in less than the hundred thousandth part of a second. That it does so is shown when we see a lightning flash; which certainly does not last so long. But it does not dispose of the impression, so as to be ready independently to receive new impressions, in less than the tenth of a second. When we look at a moving body, especially at a body in swift motion, we recognise the difficulties arising from this peculiarity of eyesight; for we find that the mind is quite unable to separate the different impressions received during each tenth of a second, or rather existing simultaneously all the time that we are looking at a

swiftly-moving body. If the eye were an absolutely perfect organ, receiving and disposing of each impression in an indefinitely minute portion of time, and if the mind could deal with all the successive images thus conveyed to it, we could see a cannon ball distinctly at every point of its flight, we could watch separately each spoke of a wheel of a swiftly-advancing railway train—nay, the details of a swiftly revolving top or gyroscope could all be as distinctly seen as if the body were at rest.

Thus is the eye defective in that it cannot always with sufficient rapidity deal with the impressions it receives. We shall presently see that in an important class of scientific observations this is not only a defect, but renders the eye absolutely useless for special forms of work. There are cases in science like the case of the ball as it leaves the mouth of the cannon, where the eye does not see *ill*, but *not at all*. There are other cases where it sees the thing that is not,—where scientific observation conducted by the eye alone indicates results as remote from the truth as the apparent stillness of a sleeping top.

The eye has another defect, which, regarding sight as an organ of scientific research, is still more serious. The eye receives an impression, though it does not dispose of it, in a very minute fraction of a second. After that short space of time (too short to be appreciable) has past, the impression received does not increase in strength, though the object observed may be kept in the field of view, unchanged in position, for a much longer time. The brain may, indeed, in the course of time, become conscious of more in the field of view than had been noticed at first; and if the conditions of light, &c., are varying, more may actually become visible; but in the one case all that is finally recognised had been seen (though not noticed) from the beginning; in the latter case all that becomes visible under particular conditions of light and shade is visible at once, not through any gradual strengthening of an impression at first imperfectly received. If the eye could, by continually gazing on an object, gain a continually strengthening impression of the object, more being seen as minute after minute passed, it is obvious that many objects in the heavens which now escape ordinary, or even telescopic vision, might be seen if looked at long enough. A nebula, for instance, so faint as to be quite imperceptible at a momentary view, might be seen after a minute's looking, or (failing that) after ten minutes or an hour of steady gazing. But we know that, so far from this being the case, the eye cannot bear to be directed at the same object for any great

length of time. It wearies, the object becomes less and less distinct, and at last the eye is obliged to seek rest. The experiment of looking for awhile at a dark object on a bright ground or *vice versâ*, or at a coloured object, and then turning the eye to a uniform white or light grey surface, shows clearly that the longer the eye is used in steady looking at an object the less clearly it sees the object. For instance, when we turn the eye to the uniform light-tinted surface, we see as a dark object there the bright object we had been looking at; in other words, the part of the retina on which the rays of light from the bright object had fallen has become in a certain degree insensible to the action of light, so that before it was turned from the bright object it received a less brilliant impression than it had at the beginning of the observation.

It is obvious, also, that if by any means one of the defects here considered could be removed or corrected, the other would be increased.

There are, however, other, and for scientific research more serious defects in ordinary vision than those just considered. In observation more than mere seeing is required. It is essential that either a trustworthy record should be taken of what has been seen, or that the memory should be perfect to recall it—to give a faithful picture of what has been seen, or a clear and correct description. Otherwise the observer alone knows what has been seen, and the cause of science—that is, the knowledge of facts by many persons—is not advanced.

In all these three points in which the eye of man is defective, an eye provided by science is practically free from fault, or if it is not yet quite free from fault, promises soon to become so.

Let us consider illustrative instances of the way in which each defect is corrected when, instead of the retina, with all its defects, physical and physiological, the photographic plate, wet or dry according to circumstances, is employed for scientific vision.

When we employ a high telescopic power to examine the disc of the sun, we might expect that the details of that wonderful surface would be seen with a degree of distinctness proportioned to the size and quality of the telescope employed. With a small telescope, those strange objects, the so-called ‘solar rice-grains’ (really two or three hundred miles in length and breadth), cannot be seen at all, for the simple reason that the optical image of each point of a luminous body is a disc, larger in proportion as the object-glass or mirror is smaller, and that the consequent blurring

of the solar grains (the enlargement of each by a fringe of light all around it) suffices to confuse all of them together. The spaces between them are altogether lost. No matter how perfect the telescope for its size, or how great the magnifying power applied to the image formed at the focus of the object-glass, or how keen the eye with which the magnified image is examined, the darker spaces between the solar rice-grains cannot possibly be seen with a small object-glass, since they do not exist in the image which it forms. But when a large object-glass is employed, the fringes (called diffraction fringes) are all narrowed, and the spaces between the rice-grains should become visible.

But unfortunately a difficulty enters here which prevents anything like perfect vision of these singular objects, in the study of which probably resides the most promising field of future solar research. The observer has to look at the sun through our own air, and this air, even on the calmest and clearest day, is not a medium through which perfect intelligence can be obtained respecting remote luminous objects by the natural eye. Not only are its various layers always more or less irregularly distributed and commingled, but they are in a state of constant movement. If the edge of the solar disc, as seen in a telescope, be observed carefully even on a clear, calm day, multitudes of minute waves will be seen in continuous oscillation, as if the surface of the sun were some vast, never-resting, molten sea. In reality these waves simply indicate the disturbance of our atmosphere. They show that every point of light in the solar disc vibrates and oscillates as our air moves, like the image of a star seen by reflection at the surface of disturbed water. Now if the eye could take a perfectly instantaneous view, each point of the solar disc would at that instant occupy an unchanged position, and the image of the sun would be seen free from all blurring, so far at least as this cause is concerned. Since, however, this is not the case, and since, owing to the permanence of visible impressions, the eye is affected by all the images of each point of the sun's disc visible during about one-tenth of a second (in which time each point usually accomplishes multitudinous vibrations), it is manifest that the entire image of the disc must usually be blurred and indistinct. Here let us not be misunderstood. The blurring is not such as an ordinary eye would notice at all. An observer shall look through a fine telescope at the sun, or moon, or a planet (for of course this peculiarity affects all such bodies), and be charmed by the sharpness and clearness of the definition,—just as he would be

charmed if he looked through such a telescope at a distant landscape on a fine day. In each case each point of light in the real object is turned into a minute disc, even by the telescope's action, apart from the effect of atmospheric disturbance; but the eye does not recognise a peculiarity corresponding in fact to what the eye itself shows when without telescopic aid we use it to examine any object whatever. In scientific observation, however, we have to remember what defects actually exist, not those alone of which the eye may be sensible. And the observer who has studied the sun so persistently that he has from time to time caught moments of atmospheric stillness and seen what lies actually *there* in the solar surface, though usually blurred by atmospheric disturbance, knows how relatively imperfect is the ordinary view of that surface, even in the finest observing weather and with the most powerful telescopes yet made by man.

So far as the human eye is concerned this difficulty can never be overcome. We might indeed so arrange matters (somewhat as Mr. Galton has recently done to obtain instantaneous views of a galloping horse or a swiftly-flying bird), that the eye should receive instantaneous views only of the solar surface.¹ But no eye could in such views catch all the details so as to be able to reproduce them effectively in a sketch or drawing; and without this, such observations of the solar surface would be of comparatively small value. All that could be done, indeed, in this way, had already been done, in a series of observations by Secchi, Nasmyth, Dawes, Huggins, Langley, and others, giving general ideas, unfortunately somewhat conflicting, of the constitution of the solar surface, but not showing trustworthy views of details existing at any given moment, still less showing series of views taken systematically, so that changes occurring either in shorter or in longer periods of time could be observed and duly recorded.

In this difficulty the photographic eye supplied a perfect resource. The inferiority of the lustre of the solar disc which had proved an obstacle to the successful photographic delineation even of the spots and coarser details, was made to help in mastering

¹ As I write, it seems to me by the way that the experiment might be well worth trying of observing the sun through radial slits, so arranged near the eye of a revolving disc that each would allow a momentary view of the sun's disc, while the interval between the passage of each being the tenth of a second the view would be continuous to the eye. This would not obviate (though it would diminish) the difficulty considered above, but it would reduce in almost any required degree the light and heat received from the sun, and without any such optical effects as result from the usual methods of protecting the eye from the solar rays.

the difficulty arising from atmospheric disturbances. At his observatory near Meudon, M. Janssen so arranged matters that a shutter in which was a narrow slit was carried athwart the solar rays in so short a time that—as he calculated—light was admitted from each part of the solar disc to the corresponding part of the photographic plate for only the two thousandth part of a second. In so short a space of time the atmospheric disturbances could do nothing (or practically nothing) to blur the image. And not only was the image thus seen, as it were, by the photographic eye, perfectly sharp and clear, but it was left (after development) on the photographic plate for study throughout all future time. As I have often had occasion to tell members of lecture audiences to whom Janssen's pictures of the solar disc have been exhibited with the oxyhydrogen lantern, one may actually, in looking at one of these views, see more of the detail of the sun's surface than has been seen by the most skilful telescopicist, even though he should have studied the sun's surface on every clear day during a long observing career.

Consider now the importance of what in this case the photographic eye of science is able to effect. On every clear day (and scarcely a day passes during which the sun cannot be seen in a clear sky from some one of the many observatories at which this method might be applied), the minutest details of the sun's surface can be observed better than a Herschel or a Dawes has ever observed it; what is seen can be recorded in the minutest fraction of a second better than the most skilful artist could record it after many hours of hard work (supposing such an artist could ever see these details long enough to delineate them at all); and this can be repeated hour after hour (or more quickly if changes succeed each other rapidly), day after day, and year after year.

In passing, I may note that by this method of rapid photography the progress of a transit of Venus, and especially the delicate changes of appearance occurring when Venus is entering upon or leaving the disc of the sun, might be very satisfactorily observed and recorded. Photography failed as applied in 1874, as physicists and astronomers alike expected and predicted that it must fail. The disc of Venus, as shown in the photographs then obtained, was of every shape but the right one. Too much was in fact attempted, with telescopes of inadequate defining power, and without sufficiently delicate means for limiting, as in M. Janssen's arrangement at Meudon, the period of exposure. Had these points been attended to, well-defined pictures of Venus in

transit might then have been obtained. If at any suitable observatories these points should be attended to during the transit of December next, such pictures may well be secured. But it is not very likely that anything of the kind will happen, as the work lies outside the scope of unofficial astronomers.

Consider next a case in which the second defect of natural vision is concerned.

Among the objects which astronomers have found at once most interesting and most mysterious, are the great irregular masses of star mist, which lie, not 'floating many a rood,' but spreading through countless millions of millions of cubic miles of space. Regarded by the great Sir W. Herschel as vast masses of fire-mist, these objects came in later times to be looked upon as in reality congeries of stars, or stars so closely crowded together, but so remote that even in the most powerful telescope they were not individually discernible. But at length, in 1864, our great spectroscopist, Mr. W. Huggins, turning his telescope armed with a spectroscope on the nebulae, found that some among them, and in particular the great irregular nebulae, are in reality masses of luminous gas. For, instead of shining with all the colours of the rainbow as the stars do (and as, of course, congeries of stars must needs do), they were found to shine with monochromatic light in some cases, with lights of three tints only in the great majority of cases, and in a few cases with lights of four tints. The Orion nebula was one of those shining with light of four tints.

It became forthwith a matter of interest and moment to determine the physical condition of these amazing masses of gas (masses so vast that the whole domain of the sun, even to the extremest limits of the solar system, sinks by comparison into the merest point). Are the features of the irregular nebulae unchanging in shape? Is the relative brightness of different parts of such nebulae constant? Are there signs of any change by which portions of such nebulae may be condensing into discrete stars? These questions, and questions like them, have long been asked; but it has long been felt that so far as ordinary telescopic vision is concerned they are to all intents and purposes unanswerable. Observers have announced changes of shape in the great irregular nebulae, changes of lustre, and separation into stars. But hitherto it has appeared in every case, on closer inquiry, that either the observers had been deceived, or that there was nothing to show that real changes had occurred, though it

might remain possible that such was the case. The difficulty consisted in this, that the luminosity of the irregular nebulae is so faint, the varieties of lustre in different parts are so delicate, as to render it impossible for any eye, however skilful, rightly to appreciate them, and still more to delineate them so accurately that trustworthy comparisons can be made between the pictures drawn by different observers, or by the same observer at different times.

If the eye, by resting long and patiently on an object of this sort—say, for instance, ‘that marvellous round of misty light below Orion’—could recognise more and more detail, we might well trust to one or other of our laborious telescopists to wait and watch until at last the true shapes of these mysterious mist masses had been determined. But with long looking comes only more confused vision. Increase of telescopic power avails nought. Nay, the more powerful the telescope employed the more completely are the more delicate portions of the luminosity lost (as *light*, though by increase of *size* some of them may be rendered discernible). It must always be remembered, in considering telescopic vision, that no telescopic contrivance whatever will increase the apparent luminosity of a surface. A comet seen through a telescope always looks fainter than the same object appears to the naked eye. Even the sun and moon (though the former cannot be looked at at all through a large telescope, and the latter only with pain), appear larger only, not brighter, than to the naked eye—nay, not even quite so bright.

In this case, then, as in the other, there is no resource so far as ordinary human vision is concerned. But here again the photographic eye of science can do the work which the human eye is unable to accomplish. I have before me, as I write, an enlarged positive of the great nebula of Orion, obtained by Dr. Henry Draper, of New York, son of Dr. J. W. Draper, the eminent physicist, recently deceased (by whom the moon was first successfully photographed). In this large view of the most mysterious object in the heavens, I see, without the trouble of leaving my study, more detail than can be shown to the eye by any but the most powerful telescopes. I have, indeed, to make some correction for the unduly large discs of the stars which lie in the same field of view as the nebula, and, unless I mistake, are for the most part immersed in its gaseous substance. But even in the case of the stars I find much to wonder at; for here I actually find rendered by the photographic eye, stars of less than the fifteenth magni-

tude—such stars as the telescope with which this grand picture of the nebula was taken would barely show to the keenest eye, using the telescope in the ordinary way. They suffice to show—these minute star-discs—that ere long the photographic eye will absolutely reveal stars fainter (nay, very much fainter) than any that can be seen with the telescope itself. Only a short time ago it was considered a triumph of the photographer's art to show stars of the eighth and ninth magnitude; already we have reached the fourteenth, and very nearly the fifteenth; in a few years the twentieth or even much smaller magnitudes will be as readily attained.

But, after all, the chief wonder of the photograph before me lies in the presentation of those great masses of nebulous matter forming the gigantic 'fish-mouth' of the Orion nebula. *There*, in the field of view, lie pictured these mighty streams and bulks, and branching conglomerations of nebulous matter, which have made the nebula in Orion the marvel of marvels (and also the mystery of mysteries) to astronomers since Huyghens first supposed that here he saw through the star-sphere into ever-glorious heavens beyond the crystalline.

Even this picture, however, marvellous though it is, is to me less wonderful than the tiny one-inch negative from which it has been enlarged. I have not indeed seen that negative, which still, I believe, remains in Dr. Draper's possession; but I have seen the negative of an earlier photograph, and though the enlarged picture obtained from it was less excellent than the picture before me, the negative was even more impressive—at least to one acquainted with the telescopic aspect of the great Orion nebula. For nearly an hour, in Dr. Draper's study, I had that negative before me, and I could have passed many hours, absorbing, so to speak, the evidence it gives respecting the Orion nebula. The longer it was studied the more detail could be seen in it; no picture of the nebula which I have ever seen—though the finest views by Rosse, Lassell, Secchi, John Herschel, and others, have come under my scrutiny—no view of the nebula I have ever had, even with the most powerful telescope, was to me half as instructive or as impressive as this little picture. More detail was here, though only the study of a microscopic eye could recognise it. But that was not all; the thought that seemed so impressive, so thrilling, as to surpass even the feeling of awe with which in the solemn darkness of night we see some mighty group of suns sweep into the field of view of the telescope—was this, that here on this tiny square inch of shore-line, with its thin

film of chemical sands, had been received the impress of waves which for years had been traversing the solemn depths of space. Over those millions of millions of miles had they swept in their swift rush, at a rate which would circle eight times the entire circumference of the earth in a single beat of a seconds pendulum, and here on this square inch of glass had they left their message, picturing here for us a nebulous mass, or rather an agglomeration of such masses, occupying billions of billions of cubic miles of space, but so remote that to the unaided eye the entire nebula appears but as a faint speck of misty light clinging around one of the fainter stars in the sword of the Giant Orion. Here we have mirrored by Nature herself 'that marvellous round of milky light below Orion'—

His isles of light, his silvery streams,
And gloomy gulfs of mystic shade.

I know no greater achievement of physical science.

But how long had the photographic eye of science to contemplate the nebula in Orion before so much was revealed? Janssen's photographs of the sun were taken in the two-thousandth part of a second. Dr. Draper's telescope, swayed by ingenious machinery, was directed to the Orion nebula for a period *one quarter of a million times as long*—viz. for 137 minutes. For two hours and seventeen minutes did his powerful telescope follow the nebula as the earth's motion caused that object to be carried from east to west, moving so truly that during the whole of that time the image of the nebula occupied a constant position on the photographic plate. The tiny light-wavelets which came from the distant nebula (after a light-journey of a score of years, at the least) had to pour during all that time upon the chemical plate to produce the impression indicated by the darkening of those parts of the negative on which the light from the nebula had fallen. So long was the photographic eye directed on the nebula, to take a single view!

Wonderful, however, though this achievement is, we have now to record achievements which, regarded as indicating the visual capacities of the photographic eye, are still more wonderful.

What would have been said or thought two hundred years ago—even by a Newton—if men had been told that one day an eye would be directed on the heavenly bodies, which would not only gain more and more information respecting the aspect of those bodies during each moment of its gaze of two or more hours, but would actually *see* what those bodies are made of, and

that by means of rays to which the ordinary eye is absolutely insensible? Such, however, is what the photographic eye of science has been able to do.

In this work our own distinguished spectroscopist, Dr. Huggins, has shared the labours of Dr. Draper, though in another quarter of the globe. Let us first, however, read the account of his work, given by Dr. Draper in a paper read before the National Academy of Sciences, at Washington, in April 1882 :—

‘For about eighteen months,’ he says, ‘I have been giving attention to the nebula in Orion, with two objects in view. First, to ascertain whether any changes are taking place in that body, by making a series of photographs, to be compared in the future with a similar series ; and, second, to photograph the spectrum of the nebula in various parts, so as to see whether any new lines could be found, and also whether the composition is uniform throughout. . . . In carrying out the second object two contrivances have been used : first, a direct vision prism in the cone of rays from the objective before they had reached a focus ; and, second, the two-prism spectroscope, with which I have taken photographs of stellar spectra for some years past. During the month of March I have made two good photographs with each of these arrangements. The results derived from these photographs are interesting, partly from what they show, and partly from what they promise in the future.’

Rightly to understand what these photographs tell us, it is necessary to remember what spectroscopic analysis applied to the great Orion nebula had shown. I have said that the Orion nebula shines with light of four tints only. One of the tints thus recognised is a tint with which (though usually with others also) the gas nitrogen, in a state of incandescence, is known to shine ; two others of the lines indicate the existence of hydrogen in that far-off system ; the fourth line has not yet been associated with any known terrestrial element, although it is near one belonging to the metal barium, and still nearer one belonging to oxygen. Proximity in these inquiries counts for nothing. The fact that only one line of nitrogen and only two of hydrogen can be seen in the spectrum of the gaseous nebulae has been regarded by Dr. Huggins as suggesting the possibility that, in these stupendous but chaotic objects, elementary substances may exist which really are constituents or elementary forms of hydrogen and nitrogen (erroneously regarded, in that case, by our physicists as elements). Professor Clarke, of Cincinnati, also adopted a similar

view; and, later, others have shown signs of coming round to the opinion as at least probable. Be this as it may, it will be seen what supremely interesting questions are associated with the spectroscopic analysis of the irregular nebulae, and how full of significance are any results which may either correct or extend those originally obtained by Dr. Huggins as far back as 1864.

Read in this light, the following statements from Dr. Draper's account of his results must be regarded as among the most interesting of those which have within the last few years been communicated to the scientific world:—

‘The most striking feature,’ he says, ‘is, perhaps, the discovery of two condensed portions of the nebula, just preceding the trapezium’ (that is on the left, in a telescopic view of four stars which lie around the dark opening, forming what is called the ‘fish’s mouth’ in the nebula), ‘which give a continuous spectrum.’ In other words, these bright portions of the nebula shine with the same kind of light as if they consisted of multitudinous small stars—as though the nebula were in these parts *condensing into suns*. ‘At these places there is either gas under great pressure, or liquid, or solid.’

‘I have not been able,’ proceeds Dr. Draper, ‘to detect any stars of sufficient magnitude in these portions to produce this effect, either in my photographs of the nebula, or in any of the well-known drawings of this object. It seems to me, also, that the photographs show evidence of continuous spectrum in other parts of the nebula.’

In these respects the conclusions arrived at by Lord Rosse in his memoir (‘Phil. Trans.’ June 20, 1867, p. 70), that parts of the nebula in Orion seem to indicate signs of resolvability into stars, are to a certain extent borne out.

Let us here turn for a moment to consider Dr. Huggins’ account of his equally remarkable success in photographing the spectrum of the nebula—a success achieved, singularly enough, in the same month (March last) in which Dr. Draper’s photographs were obtained. In Dr. Huggins’ case it will be noticed a mist dimmed the photographic eye before it had had time to take a good look, in fact when it had been looking only for the comparatively short space of three-quarters of an hour.

On March 7 Dr. Huggins succeeded in obtaining a photograph of the spectrum of the great nebula in Orion, extending from the blue-green part (a little below the hydrogen line F) far into the ultra-violet that is beyond the range of colour by which the eye is affected. The instrument employed was the 18-inch Cassegrainian

belonging to the Royal Society. 'The exposure,' says Dr. Huggins, 'was limited by the coming up of clouds to forty-five minutes.' 'The photographic plate shows a spectrum of bright lines, and also a narrower continuous spectrum, which I think must be due to stellar light. The bright stars forming the trapezium in the "fish's mouth" of the nebula were kept close to the side of the slit, so that the light from the adjacent part of the nebula might enter the slit.' In other words, Dr. Huggins was working very near, if not actually upon, those more condensed portions of the nebula which had given evidence to Dr. Draper that they consist in all probability of closely aggregated stars. Along a strip of the spectrum's breadth, corresponding, no doubt, to the brightest part of one of these condensed portions, his photograph showed the continuous spectrum corresponding to stellar aggregations—that is, he, like Dr. Draper, obtained the kind of light which is received from an irresolvable nebula really consisting of multitudes of minute stars. 'Outside this continuous spectrum,' that is, corresponding to the part of the nebula just beyond that which certainly shone as with stellar light, 'I suspect,' proceeds Dr. Huggins, 'an exceedingly faint trace of a continuous spectrum. In my papers on the visible spectrum of the nebula in Orion and other nebulae I found four bright lines. . . . In the photograph these lines, which had been observed in the visible spectrum, are faint, but can be satisfactorily recognised and measured. In addition to these known lines the photograph shows a relatively strong line in the ultra-violet.' In other words, the photograph shows, more strongly than those lines which are visible to the eye, another line, stronger in the photograph but utterly invisible to the eye, because, whatever the intensity of the ether vibrations belonging to this kind of ray the eye has not the power of recognising them at all. Just as the ear is unable to recognise certain sounds (one may really speak of them as such, for such they are to *some* auditory organs) because of their exceeding shrillness, so the eye cannot recognise light¹ beyond the extreme violet of the spectrum because of the exceeding shortness of its wave length. Such light, if light it can properly be called, was that which recorded its presence in Dr. Huggins' photograph. 'I cannot be certain,' he

¹ I speak of it as *light*, though perhaps with strict regard to accuracy the term should be limited to rays or waves which the eye can actually recognise by their action in producing the visual effect called light. But as there are certainly some auditory organs which can appreciate sounds to which others are insensible, so may it be with sight. There may be creatures which can recognise ultra-violet light.

says, 'whether this new line is really single, or is double, or multiple.' It appears to correspond in position with a line known as G in the typical spectrum of white stars, such as Sirius, Vega, and Altair (really bluish white).

Speaking of this ultra-violet and invisible line, Dr. Draper says, 'I have not found this line, though I have other lines which Dr. Huggins does not appear to have photographed. This may be due to the fact that he had placed the slit' (directed his spectro-scope one might perhaps say, though not with the same technical correctness) 'on a different region of the nebula,' or to the use of a different kind of telescope and prism, or to the use of a different sensitive preparation.

That different parts of this marvellous nebula are constituted differently seems further shown by the circumstance that two of the fainter lines in Dr. Draper's photographic spectrum are apparently not of the same length as the slit, one being quite short and the other discontinuous—the interpretation of this observation being, that only a small portion of the nebulous region under observation shone with one of these tints, and only small portions here and there with the other. 'If this observation should be confirmed by future photographs of greater strength it might point,' says Dr. Draper, 'to a non-homogeneous constitution of the nebula, though differences of intrinsic brightness would require to be eliminated,' that is to say, the apparent shortness of one line and discontinuity of the other may be due, not to absence of the material shining with that particular tint in the parts corresponding to the invisibility of the line, but simply to those portions of the nebula being very much fainter.

Dr. Huggins also suspects the existence of other lines, very faint, in the ultra-violet portion of the spectrum, but he is not certain of their presence. 'I hope,' he says, 'by longer exposures and with more sensitive plates, to obtain information on this and other points,' a hope in which Dr. Draper fully shares. Everyone will, I think, agree with the final remark of our veteran spectroscopist: 'It is perhaps not too much to hope that the further knowledge of the spectrum of the nebulae afforded us by photography may lead, by the help of terrestrial experiments, to more definite information as to the state of things existing in those bodies.' How rapid has been the recent progress of photography in this direction may be shown by the following remark of Dr. Draper's: 'As illustrating the delicacy of working required in this research, it may be mentioned that in one of these photographs

the spectrum of a star of the tenth magnitude is easily discerned. It is only a short time since it was considered a feat to get the image of a ninth magnitude star, and now the light of a star of one magnitude less may be photographed *even when dispersed into a spectrum.*'

Here let us consider how very wonderful is the work which the photographic eye of science has done with the stars themselves. I well remember what a revelation it seemed to me when my friend Dr. W. Huggins, after reading my first treatise on astronomy ('Saturn and its System,' written in almost perfect ignorance of the work which Dr. Huggins and Professor Miller were doing with the spectroscope), sent me the first report which he and his colleague had sent to the Royal Society. That a means of research, which had indeed already revealed much respecting the sun, should have been applied to objects like the stars, which even in the most powerful telescopes appear as mere points of light—that, for instance, we should be able by means of the teachings of a spectroscope to tell that iron, sodium, bismuth, calcium, hydrogen, and so forth, exist in the glowing gaseous atmosphere of the star Aldebaran—this seemed to me then so marvellous an achievement (and indeed seems so now) that I almost held my breath as I passed from paragraph to paragraph of the simply-worded report. Yet what I have now to speak of is even more wonderful.

Already in 1863 Drs. Huggins and Miller had taken a photograph of the spectrum of the star Sirius, the first time, as Dr. Huggins remarks, that the rays of a star 'had recorded themselves upon a photographic plate after dispersion by a prism,' and also after dispersion by the cylindrical lens necessary to convert the image of a star into a line, without which its spectrum would itself be only a line, not a band, and the dark lines only breaks in the rainbow-tinted line instead of recognisable cross-lines. 'For certain instrumental reasons,' writes Dr. Huggins, 'the photographs which we then took did not possess sufficient purity of the spectrum to give them a scientific value.'

Dr. Huggins then describes the instrumental means employed by himself in later years to obtain more perfect photographic spectra. I pass over this description, except one passage in which he so admirably indicates the distinction between photographic and ordinary vision that I feel tempted to quote it *verbatim*. It runs thus: 'Our common notion of light is limited not by the actual extent of range of the radiations of a luminous

body, but by the power of our eyes to see them. Of the long range of radiations coming from highly-heated matter, the sun for example, only a small portion falls within the power of the eye. Beyond the extreme violet, where visibility ends, a great range of shorter vibrations beats upon the eye, and we know it not. So on the other side below the red all consciousness of light fails us; but here another sense, that of the feeling of heat and warmth, enables us still to know that a radiated influence from the hot body is coming upon us. These two invisibles, the ultra-violet and the ultra-red, though they cannot stimulate our eyes directly, can make themselves known to us mediately through certain actions on other bodies. One of these is the disturbing influence they exert on delicately-balanced salts of silver, which we call their photographic power. This action was regarded as so exclusively the property of the ultra-violet portion of the spectrum, that these rays have been distinguished by the names "chemical rays," "photographic rays." Quite recently, however, Captain Abney, by the discovery of a new molecular condition of silver bromide, has brought the whole of the other end of the spectrum, the ultra-red, within the power of the photographic plate. He has, I believe, taken the photograph of a kettle of boiling water in the dark by means of its own radiation.'

It is, however, the ultra-violet part of the spectrum which Dr. Huggins and Dr. Draper have employed to obtain their photographic spectra of the stars, nebulae, comets, &c. Dr. Huggins remarks on this point that we shall, perhaps, underrate the importance of a knowledge of the ultra-violet spectra of stars, if we consider photographs as simply adding so much in length to the visible spectrum, for there are reasons why a knowledge of this part of the spectrum may be of exceptional value to us.

Dr. Huggins devised a very ingenious way of avoiding the loss of light due to the interposition of a cylindrical lens for the purpose already mentioned (to change the focal image of the star from a point to a line). He left the focal image a point, so that the spectrum was only a line, but he allowed the spectrum to repeat itself in a series of lines parallel to each other, so that the same effect was produced as by a series of lines in shading, the dark lines in the spectrum being seen across these parallel lines at right angles to their length (the dark lines, really made up of a series of dark dots, breaks in the continuity).

I am here rather considering the surprising nature of methods

employed than anxious to explain the significance of the results obtained. But I would ask in passing whether anything can be much more impressive than the thought that by means of the photographic eye, thus ingeniously employed, Drs. Draper and Huggins (for they attained almost simultaneously results practically identical), science should have been able to classify the suns which people space into their several orders, setting our own sun, the star we know most of, in its proper place in the celestial category. Father Secchi had made a rough classification from ordinary spectroscopic observation, but by the photographic method the classification is shown to be absolutely justified, or rather enforced, by the observed distinctions between the spectra. I have examined in Dr. Draper's studio, photographic spectra in which the radiations of Sirius, Vega, Capella, and Arcturus are severally brought into direct comparison with the solar spectrum as obtained (after reflection) from the disc of a planet. One recognises systematic progression from the spectrum of a white or bluish-white star to that of a yellowish-white star—like Capella, whose spectrum is almost absolutely the same as our sun's—and onwards to the spectrum of a reddish star like Arcturus. But consider how wonderful is all this! Here is science employing the photographic eye to arrange the stars into orders according to their respective ages, and calling in the aid of a planet to bring the sun's light into comparison with theirs.

We cannot resist the feeling, as Dr. Huggins well remarks, that we really have to do in these cases with actual physical change and progression. 'The question presents itself,' he says, 'Have we before us stars of permanently different orders, or have we to do with some of the life-changes through which all stars pass? Does the sun's position somewhere before Arcturus in the order of change indicate also his relative age? On these points we know nothing certainly. If I may give some play to the scientific use of the imagination, I would ask you to imagine an inhabitant from some remote part of the universe, seeing for the first time an old man with white hair and wrinkled brow, to ask, Was he born thus? The answer would be, No; in this child, this youth, this man of mature age, you see some of the life-changes through which the old man has passed. So, giving play to the scientific imagination, there may have been a time when a photograph of the solar spectrum would have presented the typical lines only which are still in Vega. At a subsequent period these would have been narrower and more defined, and other lines would have made their appear-

ance. And if we allow the scientific imagination to project the Friday evenings of the Royal Institution into the far future, the lecturer, clad it may be in the skin of a white bear, may have to describe how the spectrum of the then feeble sun has already passed into the class of spectra which now distinguishes the stars which shine with red light.'

Note here also another quality of the photographic eye. It does its work not for a day or a year, but for all time. The pictures which I examined in 1880 at Dr. Draper's house in New York, stored in the museums of distant future ages, may be brought out for comparison with photographs then recently taken, to show how the radiations of our sun have changed in character from the time when the former photographs were obtained.

And here in passing I must touch on a case in which it was necessary to devise a special arrangement for preparing the light which was to be examined by the photographic eye. This was in the celebrated experiments by which Dr. Henry Draper showed that oxygen exists in the atmosphere of the sun, *not*, as in the case of hydrogen, in a condition enabling it to absorb more light than it receives, but in such a condition (more intensely heated) that it emits more light than it absorbs, and so makes its presence known in the solar spectrum not by dark lines but by bright ones. It was necessary for Dr. Draper, in these experiments, to bring the spectrum of the sun into direct comparison with that of our own atmosphere. He took the electric spark between electrodes of iron, in the open air, so that in the spectrum of the spark there appeared necessarily the bright lines of oxygen and nitrogen, the gases which form our air. But it was necessary for this purpose to have the full light of the spark, and the spark being irregular, not linear, a difficulty arose, which could not be met by using an ordinary slit as in other cases, for more light was wanted than could be received through such a slit. Accordingly Dr. Draper caused the spark to travel in a slice of space left between two cheeks of soapstone, so that the spark could only work in a plane, and the edge view of the spark so working was of course simply linear. Here again the photographic eye left a perfect record, which any one can examine without leaving his study, for it has been reproduced by an autotype process. Observation by the ordinary visual method could have done little in comparing the flashing, dazzling, ever-changing light of the electric spark with the steady light of the sun. But in the case of the photographic eye, flashes and rapid changes produce no disturbing

effects ; it simply goes on recording the quantity of light received, as steadily when the light comes by flashes as when it comes in a uniform stream.

I might deal further and as fully with the work done by photography in obtaining spectra of the celestial objects—on the whole the most important and the most expressly scientific work which the photographic eyes of science have yet achieved ; I might consider Dr. Huggins's recent contributions to our knowledge of the spectra of comets, and to his success in showing that comet Wells differs in several important physical characteristics from other comets which had been spectroscopically examined. Attention might also be directed, did space permit, to the remarkable achievement of Captain Abney and Mr. Schuster during the recent eclipse in photographing the spectrum of the sun's corona. But sufficient has already been said on this point to show how much the photographic eye can do by long-continued gazing to supplement the work of the easily tired and easily satiated natural eye. We must now turn to consider one other important point in which the natural eye is defective.

In ordinary telescopic observation there is much room for illusion and also for self-deception. An observer may be misled by effects of contrast. Thus, as I have elsewhere noted, the French astronomer Chacornac once advanced an ingenious theory in explanation of the supposed circumstance that the disc of Jupiter is brighter near the edge than in the middle, the real fact being that the apparent excess of brightness at the edge of the disc is simply an effect of contrast against the dark background of the sky, the part which seems the brighter being in reality the darker part of the disc. So again, a very elaborate theory has been devised to explain why the floor of the lunar crater Plato grows darker as the sun shines more fully upon it, instead of growing brighter as it should do ; the real fact being that the floor does not grow darker at all, though as the black shadows of the surrounding peaks diminish in extent and finally disappear, while the ring round the floor grows brighter till it gleams white against the relatively dark natural colour of the floor, the latter, which had by contrast with the shadows seemed lighter than it really is, is made by contrast with the bright ring around it relatively darker. And so in other cases optical illusions have deceived observers and led to false theories in science.

But again, an observer may be misled by imagination when some favourite theory has possession of his mind. 'If,' as I have

pointed out elsewhere, 'he knows, or thinks he knows, what he ought to see or might fairly expect to see, he is very apt to imagine that he does actually see it. In this way, for instance, many students of astronomy have imagined that they have seen a small companion by a star in a position where they had been told that such a companion existed, when in reality there had been some error in the description, or in their reading of it, and either no such companion existed, or else it was in some entirely different position, and perhaps quite beyond the range of the telescope employed by the observer.'

And lastly, as respects the particular class of defect we are considering, the eye, even when it may see clearly, may see only in part, and the observer may be quite unable to record accurately, either in words or in drawings, what his eye has perhaps correctly seen. I will take an example from my own experience. I remember that when I was drawing at the telescope the face of the sun, which is shown in the frontispiece to my treatise on that orb, I took exceptional pains to reproduce, without exaggeration, the remarkable spots which were present on the solar disc. I thought I had succeeded, until, several months later, I was shown a photograph of the sun, taken a day or two later, by Dr. Rutherford, at New York, in which the same spots (of course) are shown, so little changed in details that it may be taken for granted they had not changed much in size. Now, a comparison of my drawing with his photograph shows that though the spots are correctly delineated in the former, so far as details are concerned, they are without exception too large, as compared with the solar disc—an enlargement not at all necessary, for the largest spot visible on that occasion had a surface several times larger than that of the earth on which we live.

If such faults as these can be recognised in pictures drawn under favourable conditions, and with ample time and opportunities for comparing the original with the drawing, it will readily be believed that where there is hurry and excitement even the most skilful artist may be led astray. To this, for instance, we may fairly ascribe the imperfect delineation of the solar corona before photography was employed. The pictures of the corona which used to be drawn by different observers of the same eclipse—often by observers stationed but a few yards from each other—showed such discrepancies as to suggest to some the theory that the corona is only a subjective phenomenon, which appears different to different observers, just as the halo seen

around a luminous object when the eye is dazzled depends, so far as form, brightness, and distinctness are concerned, almost entirely on the eye which sees it. Even many who did not conceive any theory quite so preposterous as this, were led astray by the ill-executed drawings of the corona. I remember that in 1869 Mr. Lockyer and some others were so fully assured that the corona is something not near the sun at all, but either in our air or around the moon, that they were quite angry when mathematicians pointed out that neither theory could be entertained for a moment. Now, here was a case where, although indeed the mathematician could see his way clearly enough for himself, he could not so readily make the way clear to others. With all the efforts, for example, which I made to simplify the reasoning (actually demonstrative when understood) by which the solar nature of the corona was established, I doubt if any but mathematicians saw the points of the argument; and *they* could easily have proved the matter for themselves, so that explaining it to them was of small avail. I doubt whether to this day the solar character of the corona would have been generally accepted outside mathematical circles, had not photography lent its aid to establish the true theory by evidence which even a child could understand.

To give an idea of the inefficiency of the natural eye to deal with a matter of this sort, consider the following account given by Mr. Stone (at that time Astronomer Royal at the Cape).

‘Two persons,’ he says, ‘were asked to make drawings of the corona, and at the end of the time one man had drawn it in one shape, and the other as different as it could possibly be. The person who drew one picture was an engineer, and was sitting side by side with the other. Before the eclipse was over he turned round to look at the other’s drawing, and said, “What on earth are you doing here?” He replied, “I am drawing the outer corona.” He said it was nothing of the kind; yet he looked and saw the outer corona just as the other had drawn it; but he had overlooked that it was the inner corona he was drawing until his attention was called to it in that way.’

Here the observer saw correctly enough, but only in part. Probably both drawings were very inaccurate. Where an erroneous idea of the corona had been entertained, observers generally saw it as they thought it ought to look. It is indeed amusing now to read the accounts and to look at the pictures sent to England after the eclipse of 1870, so perfectly do they serve to

establish the theory that the corona is not a solar phenomenon ; while the photographs then taken were coming to England at the same time to show that the corona is a solar phenomenon in every detail and to the extremest ray the human eye has yet been able to catch.

Equally remarkable was the success of photography in disposing of what but for its services would have been regarded by many as proof positive of the existence of that intra-mercurial planet of Lescarbault, which all astronomers of repute are agreed now in regarding as a myth. For when news came from Pechule, in China, that Weber had seen a small round spot on the sun which, an hour later, he looked for in vain, astronomers in Europe overhauled their diurnal photographic records of the sun's face and found that there had been such a spot, but that it presented unmistakable evidence of being an ordinary spot, though small and short-lasting, having a well-defined penumbra around its not quite circular umbral nucleus.

Even when no theory holds possession of observers' minds, inaccurate pictures are drawn of the same object. One person sees one feature, and fails to notice another ; while his attention having been arrested by the former, it becomes more and more prominent to his imagination. Another person may not catch the same feature, but, passing it over, seizes upon some other, and brings it out more strongly. Photography has no such weaknesses. It records just what falls upon the prepared plate. When due care is taken to use the same kind of plates, and instruments nearly equal in size and similar in quality, we may fairly make comparisons between pictures taken at different stations, at different times, and so forth, to tell us what were the various aspects of one and the same object under those various conditions, or we may safely compare pictures of different objects taken at the same time and under the same conditions. In other words, the photographic eye is found to be trustworthy where the human eye is too often unreliable, or even deceptive.

We must speak, however, rather of the photographic eyes than of the photographic eye of science. For the eye which takes views in the minutest fraction of a second cannot, clearly, be regarded as the same eye which requires hundreds of thousands of times as long to take a single view ; nor can either be regarded as the same eye which, neither with exceeding haste nor with exceeding deliberation, takes just and truthful portraits of celestial objects, seen less truly by the human eye, and either

misjudged or misunderstood. With its three eyes—the eye of keenness, the eye of patient watchfulness, and the eye of artistic truth, photography promises to be a Cerberus to the science of the future, whose watchfulness will prevent the admission of error and detect truths which otherwise would escape us. But, indeed, with photography, spectroscopy, polariscopy, and other aids, science promises soon to be Argus-eyed.

RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

A Farewell Appearance.

A DOG STORY FOR CHILDREN.

DANDY, come here, sir, I want you.' The little girl who spoke was standing by the table in the morning-room of a London house one summer day, and she spoke to a small silver-grey terrier lying curled up at the foot of one of the window curtains.

As Dandy happened to be particularly comfortable just then, he pretended not to hear, in the hope that his child-mistress would not press the point.

But she did not choose to be trifled with in this way: he was called more imperiously still, until he could dissemble no longer and came out gradually, stretching himself and yawning with a deep sense of injury.

'I know you haven't been asleep—I saw you watching the flies,' she said. 'Come up here, on the table.'

Seeing there was no help for it he obeyed, and sat down on the table-cloth opposite to her, with his tongue hanging out and his eyes blinking, waiting her pleasure.

Dandy was rather particular as to the hands he allowed to touch him, but generally speaking he found it pleasant enough (when he had nothing better to do) to resign himself to be pulled about, lectured, or caressed by Hilda.

She was a strikingly pretty child, with long curling brown locks, and a petulant profile which reminded one of Mr. Doyle's charming wilful little fairy princesses.

On the whole, although Dandy privately considered she had taken rather a liberty in disturbing him, he was willing to overlook it.

'I've been thinking, Dandy,' said Hilda reflectively, 'that as you and Lady Angelina will be thrown a good deal together when we go into the country next week, you ought to know one another, and you've never been properly introduced yet; so I'm going to introduce you now.'

Now Lady Angelina was only Hilda's doll, and a doll, too, with

perhaps as few ideas as any doll ever had yet—which is a good deal to say.

Dandy despised her with all the enlightenment of a thoroughly superior dog; he considered there was simply nothing in her, except possibly bran, and it had made him jealous and angry for a long time to notice what influence this staring, simpering creature had managed to gain over her mistress.

‘Now sit up,’ said Hilda. Dandy sat up. He felt that committed him to nothing, but he was careful not to look at Lady Angelina, who was lolling ungracefully in the work-basket with her toes turned in.

‘Lady Angelina,’ said Hilda next, with great ceremony, ‘let me introduce my particular friend, Mr. Dandy. Dandy, you ought to bow and say something nice and clever, only you can’t; so you must give Angelina your paw instead.’

Here was an insult for a self-respecting dog! Dandy determined never to disgrace himself by presenting his paw to a doll—it was quite against his principles. He dropped on all fours rebelliously.

‘That’s very rude of you,’ said Hilda, ‘but you shall do it. Angelina will think it so odd of you. Sit up again and give your paw, and let Angelina stroke your head.’

The dog’s little black nose wrinkled and his lips twitched, showing his sharp white teeth: he was not going to be touched by Angelina’s flabby wax hand if he could help it!

Unfortunately Hilda—like older people sometimes—was bent upon forcing persons to know one another, in spite of an obvious unwillingness on at least one side, and so she brought the doll up to the terrier, and, taking one limp pink arm, attempted to pat the dog’s head with it.

This was too much: his eyes flamed red like two signal lamps, there was a sharp sudden snap, and the next minute Lady Angelina’s right arm was crunched viciously between Dandy’s keen teeth.

After that there was a terrible pause. Dandy knew he was in for it, but he was not sorry. He dropped the mangled pieces of wax one by one, and stood there with his head on one side, growling to himself, but wincing for all that, for he was afraid to meet Hilda’s indignant grey eyes.

‘You abominable, barbarous dog!’ she said at last, using the longest words she could to impress him. ‘See what you’ve done! you’ve bitten poor Lady Angelina’s arm off.’

He could not deny it—he had; he looked down at the fragments before him, and then sullenly up again at Hilda. His eyes said what he felt—‘I’m glad of it; serves her right—I’d do it again!’

‘You deserve to be well whipped,’ continued Hilda severely; ‘but you do howl so. I shall leave you to your own conscience’ (a favourite remark of her governess) ‘until your bad heart is touched, and you come here and say you’re sorry and beg both our pardons. I only wish you could be made to pay for a new arm. Go away out of my sight, you bad dog, I can’t bear to look at you!’

Dandy, still impenitent, moved leisurely down from the table and out of the open door into the kitchen. He was thinking that Angelina’s arm was very nasty, and he should like something to take the taste away. When he got downstairs, however, he found the butcher was calling and had left the area gate open—which struck him as a good opportunity for a ramble. By the time he came back Hilda would have forgotten all about it, or she might think he was lost, and find out which was the more valuable animal—an intelligent dog like himself or a silly useless doll.

Hilda saw him from the window as he bolted out with tail erect. ‘He’s doing it to show off,’ she said to herself; ‘he’s a horrid dog sometimes. But I suppose I shall have to forgive him when he comes back!’

However, Dandy did not come back that night, nor all next day, nor the day after that, nor any more; for the fact was, an experienced dog-stealer had long had his eye upon him, and Dandy happened to come across him that very morning.

He was not such a stupid dog as to be unaware he was doing wrong in following a stranger, but then the man had such delightful suggestions about him of things dogs love to eat, and Dandy had started for his run in a disobedient temper.

So he followed the broken-nosed, bandy-legged man till they reached a narrow lonely alley, and then, just as Dandy was thinking about going home again, the stranger turned suddenly on him, hemmed him up in a corner, caught him dexterously up in one hand, tapped him sharply on the head, and slipped him, stunned, into a capacious inside pocket.

* * * * *

‘I thought werry likely I should come on you in ’ere, Bob,’ said a broken-nosed man in a fur cap, about a week after Dandy’s

disappearance, to a short red-faced hoarse man, who was drinking at the bar of a public-house.

'Ah,' said the hoarse man, 'well, you ain't fur out as it happens.'

'Yes, I did,' said the other. 'I met your partner the other day, and he tells me you're looking out for a noo Toby dawg—I've got a article somewheres about me at this moment I should like you to cast a eye over.'

And, diving into his inside pocket, he fished out a small shining silver-grey terrier, which he slammed down rather roughly on the pewter counter.

Of course the terrier was Hilda's lost Dandy. For some reason or other, the dog-stealer had not thought it prudent to claim the reward offered for him as he had intended to do at first, and Dandy, not being of a breed in fashionable demand, the man was trying to get rid of him now for the best price he could obtain from humble purchasers.

'Well, we *do* want a understudy, and that's a fact,' said the hoarse man, who was one of the managers of Mr. Punch's Theatre. 'The Toby as travels with us now is breakin' up, getting so blind he don't know Punch from Jack Ketch. But that there animal 'nd never make a 'it as a Toby,' he said, examining Dandy critically: 'why, that's bin a gen'leman's dawg once, that has—we don't want no amatoors on our show!'

'It's the amatoors as draws nowadays,' said the dog-fancier: 'not but what this 'ere particular dawg has his gifts for the purfession. You see him sit up and smoke a pipe and give yer his paw, now.'

And he put Dandy through these performances on the sloppy counter. It was much worse than being introduced to Angelina; but hunger and fretting and rough treatment had broken down the dog's spirit, and it was with dull submission now that he repeated the poor little tricks Hilda had taught him with such pretty perseverance.

'It's no use talking,' said the showman, though he began to show some signs of yielding: 'it takes a tyke born and bred to make a reg'lar Toby. And this ain't a young dog, and he ain't 'ad no proper dramatic eddication—he's not worth to us not the lowest you'd take for him.'

'Well now, I'll tell you 'ow fur I'm willing to meet yer,' said the other persuasively: 'you shall have him, seein' it's *you*, for....' And so they haggled on for a little longer, but at the end of the

interview Dandy had changed hands, and was permanently engaged as a member of Mr. Punch's travelling company.

A few days after that Dandy made acquaintance with his strange fellow-performers. The men had put the show up on a deserted part of a common near London, behind the railings of a little cemetery where no one was likely to interfere with them, and the new Toby was hoisted up on the very narrow and uncomfortable shelf to go through his first interview with Mr. Punch.

When that popular gentleman appeared at his side Dandy examined him with pricked and curious ears. He was rather odd-looking, but his smile, though there was certainly a good deal of it, seemed genial and encouraging, and the poor dog wagged his tail in a conciliatory manner—he wanted some one to be kind to him again.

'The dawg's a fool, Jem,' growled Bob, the other proprietor of the show, a little shabby dirty-faced man with a thin and ragged red beard, who was watching the experiment from the outside: 'he's a-waggin' his bloomin' tail—he'll be a-lickin' of Punch's face next! Try him with a squeak.'

And Jem produced a sound which was a hideous compound of chuckle, squeak, and crow, when Dandy, in the full persuasion that the strange figure must be a new variety of cat, flew at it blindly.

But though he managed to get a firm grip of its great hook nose, there was not much satisfaction to be got out of that—the hard wood made his teeth ache, and besides, in his excitement he overbalanced himself and came suddenly down upon Mr. James Blott inside, who swore horribly and put him up again.

Then, after a little highly mysterious dancing up and down, and wagging his head, Mr. Punch, in the most uncalled-for manner, hit Dandy over the head with a stick (in order, as Jem put it, 'to get up a ill-feeling between them'), a wanton insult which made the dog madder than ever.

He did not revenge himself at once: he only barked furiously and retreated to his corner of the stage; but the next time Punch came sidling cautiously up to him, Dandy made, not for his wooden head, but for a place between his shoulders which he thought looked more yielding.

There was a savage howl from below, Punch dropped in a heap on the narrow shelf, and Mr. Blott sucked his finger and thumb with many curses.

Mr. Punch was not killed, however, though Dandy had at first imagined he had settled him. He revived almost directly, when he proceeded to rain down such a shower of savage blows from his thick stick upon every part of the dog's defenceless body, that Dandy was completely subdued long before his master thought fit to leave off.

By the time the lesson came to an end, Dandy was sore and shaken and dazed, for Jem had allowed himself to be a little carried away by personal feeling ; still it only showed Dandy more plainly that Mr. Punch was not a person to be trifled with, and, though he liked him as little as ever, he respected as well as feared him.

Unfortunately for Dandy, he was a highly intelligent terrier, of an inquiring turn of mind, and so, after he had been led about for some days with the show, and was able to think things over and put them together, he began to suspect that Punch and the other figures were not alive after all, but only a particularly ugly set of dolls, which Mr. Blott put in motion in some way best known to himself.

From the time he was perfectly certain of this he felt a degraded dog indeed. He had scorned once to allow himself to be even touched by Angelina (who at least was not unpleasant to look at, and always quite inoffensive) : now, every hour of his life he found himself ordered about and insulted before a crowd of shabby strangers by a vulgar tawdry doll, to which he was obliged to be civil and even affectionate—as if it was something real !

Dandy was an honest dog, and so, of course, it was very revolting to his feelings to have to impose on the public in this manner ; but Mr. Punch, if he was only a doll, had a way of making himself obeyed.

And though in time the new Toby learnt to perform his duties respectably enough, he did so without the least enthusiasm : it wounded his pride—besides making him very uncomfortable—when Punch caught hold of his head, and something with red whiskers and a blue frock took him by the hind legs, and danced jerkily round the stage with him. He hated that more than anything. Day by day he grew more miserable and homesick.

He loathed the Punch and Judy show and every doll in it, from the hero down to the ghost and the baby. Jem and Bob were not actually unkind to him, and would even have been friendly had he allowed it ; but he was a dainty dog, with a natural dislike to ill-dressed and dirty persons, and shrank from their

rough if well-meant advances. He never could forget what he had once been, and what he was, and often, in the close sleeping-room of some common lodging-house, he dreamed of the comfortable home he had lost, and Hilda's pretty imperious face, and woke to miss her more than ever.

At first his new masters had been careful to keep him from all chance of escape, and Bob led him after the show by a string; but, as he seemed to be getting resigned to his position, they allowed him to run loose.

He was trotting tamely at Jem's heels one hot August morning, followed by a small train of admiring children, when all at once he became aware that he was in a street he knew well—he was near his old home—a few minutes' hard run and he would be safe with Hilda!

He looked up sideways at Bob, who was beating his drum and blowing his pipes with his eyes on the lower and upper windows. Jem's head was inside the show, and both were in front and not thinking of him just then.

Dandy stopped, turned round upon the unwashed children behind, looked wistfully up at them as much as to say 'Don't tell,' and then bolted at the top of his speed.

There was a shrill cry from the children at once of 'Oh, Mr. Punch, sir, please—your dawg's a-runnin' away from yer!' and angry calls to return from the two men. Bob even made an attempt to pursue him, but the drum was too much in his way, and a small dog is not easily caught at the best of times when he takes it into his head to run away. So he gave it up sulkily.

Meanwhile Dandy ran on, till the shouts behind died away. Once an errand boy, struck by the particoloured frill round the dog's neck, tried to stop him, but he managed to slip past him and run out into the middle of the road, and kept on blindly, narrowly escaping being run over several times by tradesmen's carts.

And at last, panting and exhausted, he reached the well-remembered gate, out of which he had marched so defiantly, it seemed long ages ago.

The railings were covered with wire-netting inside, as he knew, but fortunately some one had left the gate open, and he pattered eagerly down the area steps, feeling safe and at home at last.

The kitchen door was shut, but the window was not, and, as the sill was low, he contrived to scramble up somehow and jump

into the kitchen, where he reckoned upon finding friends to protect him.

But he found it empty, and looking strangely cold and desolate; only a small fire was smouldering in the range, instead of the cheerful blaze he remembered there, and he could not find the cook—an especial patroness of his—anywhere.

He scampered up into the hall, making straight for the morning-room, where he knew he should find Hilda curled up in one of the armchairs with a book.

But that room was empty too—the shutters were up, and the half-light which streamed in above them showed a dreary state of confusion: the writing-table was covered with a sheet and put away in a corner, the chairs were piled up on the centre table, the carpet had been taken up and rolled under the sideboard, and there was a faint warm smell of flue and dust and putty in the place.

He pattered out again, feeling puzzled and a little afraid, and went up the bare stone staircase to find Hilda in one of the upper rooms, perhaps in the nursery.

But the upper rooms, too, were all bare and sheeted and ghostly, and, higher up, the stairs were spotted with great stars of whitewash, and there were ladders and planks on which strange men in dirty white blouses were talking and joking a great deal, and doing a little whitewashing now and then, when they had time for it.

Their voices echoed up and down the stairs with a hollow noise that scared him, and he was afraid to venture any higher. Besides, he knew by this time somehow that Hilda, her father and mother, all the friends he had counted upon seeing again, would not be found in any part of that house.

It was the same house, though sadly stripped and deserted, but all the life and colour and movement had gone out of it; and he ran here and there, seeking for them in vain.

He picked his way forlornly down to the hall again, and there he found a mouldy old woman with a duster pinned over her head and a dustpan and brush in her hand; for, unhappily for him, the family, servants and all, had gone away some days before into the country, and this old woman had been put into the house as care-taker.

She dropped her brush and pan with a start as she saw him, for she was not fond of dogs.

‘Why, deary me,’ she said morosely, ‘if it hasn’t give me

quite a turn. However did the nasty little beast get in? a-gallivantin' about as if the 'ole place belonged to him!

Dandy sat up and begged. In the old days he would not have done such a thing for any servant below a cook (who was always worth being polite to), but he felt a very reduced and miserable little animal indeed just then, and he thought she might be able to take him to Hilda.

But the charwoman's only idea was to get rid of him as quickly as possible.

'Why, if it ain't a Toby dawg!' she cried, as her dim old eyes caught sight of his frill. 'Here, you get out, you don't belong 'ere!'

And she took him up by the scruff of the neck and went to the front door. As she opened it, a sound came from the street outside which Dandy knew only too well: it was the long-drawn squeak of Mr. Punch.

'That's where he come from, I'll bet a penny,' cried the caretaker, and she went down the steps and called over the gate, 'Hi, master, you don't happen to have lost your Toby dawg, do you? Is this him?'

The man with the drum came up—it was Bob himself; and thereupon Dandy was ignominiously handed over the railings to him, and delivered up once more to the hard life he had so nearly succeeded in shaking off.

He had a severe beating when they got him home, as a warning to him not to rebel again—and he never did try to run away a second time. Where was the good of it? Hilda was gone he did not know where, and the house was a home no longer.

So he went patiently about with the show, a dismal little dog-captive, the dullest little Toby that ever delighted a street audience; so languid and listless at times that Mr. Punch was obliged to rap him really hard on the head before he could induce him to take the slightest notice of him.

But in spite of all this, he made the people laugh; most, perhaps, at night, when the show was lit up by a flaring can of paraffin, and he sat with his feet in Punch's coffin, howling dolefully at the melancholy strains of Bob's pipes, which Dandy always found too much for his feelings.

* * * * *

It was winter time, about a fortnight after Christmas, and the night was snowy and slushy outside, though warm enough in the kitchen of a big Belgravian house. The kitchen was crowded, a

stream of waiters and gorgeous powdered footmen and smart maids perpetually coming and going; in front of the fire a tired little terrier, with a shabby frill round his neck, was basking in the blaze, and near him sat a little dirty-faced man with a red beard, who was being listened to with some attention by a few of the upper servants who were enjoying a moment's leisure.

'Yes,' he was saying, 'I've been in the purfession a sight o' years now, but I don't know as I ever heard on a Punch's show like me and my mate's bein' engaged for a reg'lar swell evenin' party afore. It shows, to my mind, as public taste is a-comin' round—it ain't quite so low as formerly.'

The little man was Bob; and he, with his partner Jem, and Dandy, were in the house owing to an eccentric notion of its master, who happened to have a taste for experiments.

He agreed with many who consider that some kind of amusement in the intervals of dancing is welcome to children; but it was one of his ideas too that they must be getting a little bored by the inevitable lecture with the dissolving views, and find a conjuror (even after seeing him several times in a fortnight) as a rule more bewildering than amusing; although, as a present-producing animal, the last has his compensations.

He was curious to see whether the drama of Punch and Judy had quite lost its old power to please. He could easily have hired an elegant and perfectly refined form of the entertainment from some of the fashionable toy-shops or 'universal providers,' only unfortunately in these improved versions much of the original fun is often found to have been refined away.

So he had decided upon introducing the original Mr. Punch from his native streets and in his natural uncivilised state, and Jem and Bob chanced to be the persons selected to exhibit him.

'Juveniles is all alike,' observed the butler, who, having been commissioned to engage the showmen, condescended to feel a fatherly interest in the affair; 'igh or low, there's nothing pleases 'em more than seeing one party a-fetching another party a thumderin' good whack over the 'ead. That's where, in my opinion, all these pantomimes makes a mistake. There's too much bally and music 'all about 'em, and not 'arf enough buttered slide and red-'ot poker.'

'There's plenty of 'ead-whackin' in *our* show,' said Bob, with some pride, 'for my partner Jem, you see, he don't find as the dialogue come as fluid to him as he could wish for, so he cuts a

'eakin' is mostly stick—like a cheap

'ry wet and tired,' said a pretty house-
Dandy, as he lay stretched out wearily
a cake if I got one for him?'

'on cakes as a general thing,' said Bob
miss, and thankee.'

'ed his head and rejected the cake
comfortable there in the warm firelight,
as if he were back in his own old
to be hungry.

't,' said the housemaid compassionately.
ll.'

well enough—that's all his contrari-
inks hisself a deal too good for the likes
ht to be kep' on chicking, in a droring-
his satire on the unconscious Dandy.
s, that there dawg's 'art ain't in his
own on the 'ole concern, thinks it *low*!
rry fust a-turnin' up his nose at it, and
st him. Give me a Toby as takes a
he last but one as we had afore him,
on start to finish, and when Punch went
hy, that dawg used to bark and jump
isself, and he'd go in among the crowd
obby as Punch pitched out o' winder, as
land! And he warn't like the general
or he got quite thick with the Punch
on 'im, he did—and, if you'll believe
at figger a noo 'ead and costoom, it
he pined away quite rapid. But this
'air if the 'ole company went to blazes

been setting up the show in one of the
then, looking rather uneasy at finding him-
y, and Dandy was spared further upbraid-
pon to follow the pair upstairs.

a large handsome room, where at one end
of rout seats and chairs, and at the other
seeming oddly out of place in its new sur-

dy felt more ashamed of it and himself than

ever, and he was glad to get away under its ragged hangings and lie still by Jem's dirty boots till he was wanted.

And then there was a sound of children's voices and laughter as they all came trooping in, with a crisp rustle of delicate dresses and a scent of hothouse flowers and kid gloves that reached Dandy where he lay: it reminded him of evenings long ago, when Hilda had had parties and he had been washed and combed and decked out in ribbons for the occasion, and children had played with him and given him nice things to eat—they had generally disagreed with him, but now he only remembered the pleasure and the petting of it all.

He would not be petted any more! Presently these children would see him smoking a pipe and being familiar with that low Punch. They would laugh at him, too—they always did—and Dandy, like most dogs, hated being laughed at, and never took it as a compliment.

The host's experiment was evidently a complete success: the children, even the most *blasés*, who danced the newest valse step and thought pantomimes vulgar, were delighted to meet an old friend so unexpectedly. A good many had often yearned to see the whole show right through from beginning to end, and chance or a stern nurse had never permitted it. Now their time had come, and Mr. Punch, in spite of his lamentable shortcomings in every relation of life, was received with the usual uproarious applause.

At last the hero called for his faithful dog Toby, as a distraction after the painful domestic scenes, in which he had felt himself driven to throw his child out of window and silence the objections of his wife by becoming a widower, and accordingly Dandy was caught up and set on the shelf by his side.

The sudden glare hurt his eyes, and he sat there, blinking at the audience with a pitiful want of pride in his dignity as dog Toby.

He tried to look as if he didn't know Punch, who was doing all he could to catch his eye, for his riotous 'rootitoot' made him shiver nervously, and long to get away from the whole thing and lie down somewhere in peace.

Bob was scowling up at him balefully: 'I know'd that 'ere dawg would go and disgrace hisself,' he was saying to himself: 'when I get him to myself he shall catch it for this!'

Dandy was able to see better now, and he found, as he had guessed, that here was not one of his usual audiences—no homely crowd of loitering errand boys, smirched maids-of-all-work, and

ragged children jostling and turning their grinning white faces up to him.

There were children here too—plenty of them—but children at their best and daintiest, and looking as if untidiness and quarrels were things unknown to them—though possibly they were not. The laughter, however, was much the same as he was accustomed to, more musical perhaps, and pleasanter to hear, but quite as hearty and unrestrained—they were laughing at *him*, and he hung his head abashed.

But all at once he forgot his shame, though he did not remember Mr. Punch a bit the more for that: he ran backwards and forwards on his ledge, sniffing and whining, wagging his tail and giving short piteous barks in a state of the wildest excitement. The reason of it was this—near the end of the front row he saw a little girl who was bending eagerly forward with her pretty grey eyes wide open and a puzzled line on her forehead.

Dandy knew her at the very first glance. It was Hilda, looking more like a fairy princess than ever, in a pale, rose-tinted dress, and a row of pearls twisted in her bright hair.

She knew him almost as soon, for her clear voice rang out above the general laughter. ‘Oh, that isn’t Toby—he’s my own dog, my Dandy, that I lost! It is really; let him come to me, please do! Don’t you see how badly he wants to?’

There was a sudden surprised silence at this—even Mr. Punch was quiet for an instant; but as soon as Dandy heard her voice he could wait no longer, and crouched for a spring.

‘Catch the dog, somebody, he’s going to jump!’ cried the master of the house, more amused than ever, from behind.

Bob was too sulky to interfere, but some good-natured grown-up person caught the trembling dog just in time to save him from a broken leg, or worse, and handed him to his delighted little mistress; and I think the frantic joy which Dandy felt as he was clasped tight in her loving arms once more and covered her flushed face with his eager kisses more than made up for all he had suffered.

Hilda scornfully refused to have anything to do with Bob, who tried hard to convince her she was mistaken. She took her recovered favourite to her hostess.

‘He really is mine!’ she assured her earnestly; ‘and he doesn’t want to be a Toby, I’m sure he doesn’t: see how he trembles when that horrid man comes near. Dear Mrs. Lovibond, please tell them I’m to have him!’

And of course Hilda carried her point, for the showmen were not unwilling, after a short conversation with the master of the house, to give up their rights in a dog who would never be much of an ornament to their profession, and was out of health into the bargain.

Hilda held Dandy, all muddy and draggled as he was, fast in her arms all through the remainder of the performance, as if she was afraid Mr. Punch might still claim him for his own; and the dog lay there in measureless content. The hateful squeak made him start and shiver no more; he was too happy to howl at Bob's dismal pipes and drum: they had no terrors for him any more.

'I think I should like to go home now,' she said to her hostess, when Mr. Punch had finally retired. 'Dandy is so excited; feel how his heart beats, just there, you know; he ought to be in bed, and I want to tell them all at home so much!'

She resisted all despairing entreaties to stay, from several small partners who felt life a blank after she had gone, till supper came; and so her carriage was called, and she and Dandy drove home in it together once more.

'Dandy, you're very quiet,' she said once, as they bowled easily and swiftly along. 'Aren't you going to tell me you're glad to be mine again?'

But Dandy could only wag his tail feebly and look up in her face with an exhausted sigh. He had suffered much and was almost worn out; but rest was coming to him at last.

As soon as the carriage had stopped and the door was opened, Hilda ran in breathless with excitement:—

'Oh, Parker, look!' she cried to the maid in the hall, 'Dandy is found—he's here!'

The maid took the lifeless little body from her, looked at it for a moment under the lamp, and turned away without speaking. Then she placed it gently in Hilda's arms again.

'Oh, Miss Hilda, didn't you see?' she said, with a catch in her voice. 'Don't take on, now; but it's come too late—poor little dog, he's gone!'

F. ANSTEY.

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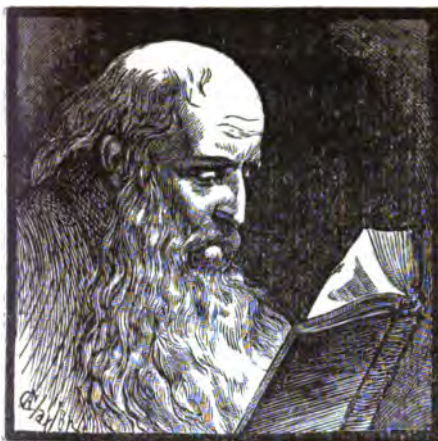
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Oh! ever thus, from childhood's hour
I've seen my fondest hopes decay
I never lov'd a tree or flower,
But 'twas the first to fade away.
I never nurs'd a dear gazelle,
To glad me with its soft black eye,
But when it came to know me well,
And love me, it was sure to die!

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Which, like the brittle glass that measures time, is often broke ere half its sands are run.

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'MANY SICK PEOPLE looked upon me as a Physician. For a long time we had been in the centre of Africa without any medical man. Natives came with all manner of diseases. One day we had a man that was said to be mad. In some of his fits he had wounded a neighbour with an arrow. Whether he was mad or not, he was evidently far from well, and I gave him a large dose of **ENO'S FRUIT SALT**. The poor fellow came back next morning to tell us that he was better. His breath was no longer offensive, and he looked cheerful. We were sorry when our supply of **FRUIT SALT** was done; it was a favourite both with natives and Europeans, and is much used along the malarious coasts.'—'Africans,' by the Rev. DUFF MACDONALD, M.A., B.D., vol. III., p. 26.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1883.

Thicker than Water.

BY JAMES PAYN, AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' 'HIGH SPIRITS,' &C.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DUMB ALLY.

SUCH was the turmoil of hate and passion produced upon Mr. Peyton's mind by the mention of his dead son's name that he took no thought of whither he was going, but actually turned to the left hand instead of the right when he left Reuben's door. The present with all its surroundings was forgotten; the streets and the motley crowd that thronged them, if they were reflected on the retina of his eye at all, conveyed no impression to his brain; he walked on like a man in a dream—and an evil dream. He beheld again the boy who had been the hope of his life becoming with frightful velocity its despair, the flower of his pride and joy devoured by a canker-worm begotten of itself till it perished loathsomely, leaving desolate the garden of his soul. He called to mind the seventy-and-seven times that he had forgiven his son for misdeeds that in another would have been past pardon, and the perjuries and ingratitude with which they had been repaid. Two incidents of the young man's vile and wasted life towered above all others, and cast a blacker shadow than the rest upon the tablets of unwilling memory: the one was the seduction of an orphan girl, his mother's frequent guest and life-long protégée; the other an attempt which had been within a hair's breadth of success to put himself, Beryl

Peyton, into a mad-house. This was not the last straw that had broken the back of endurance, for all hope of compromise or reconciliation had long been at an end; but it was the act that had substituted for disappointment and disgust abhorrence, and had turned his angry blood to gall.

From henceforth the name of Henry Peyton was wormwood to his father; lost but not regretted, dead but not forgiven, the memory of him was like some secret sin accursed and never to be spoken of. All who knew Beryl Peyton knew this; any one who did not know him, and who (as had just happened) by accident alluded to this painful subject, became in a manner involved in it and shared some portion of his resentment.

A more wretched man than this master of millions, as he walked on, thinking of these things with bent head, was hardly to be found. The Lascar he passed upon his way in rags and shivering in the summer heat; the Chinaman, poor as Job and as patient, enjoyed a happier lot; for a few pence could cause them to forget their misery in an opium dram; but for such pain as Beryl Peyton suffered there was no anodyne, for such reflections no oblivion. The tumult within him was such that for hours he walked on without even consciousness of fatigue, or of the heat of the sun, which, unlike the fire within him, had indeed spent its force. He had long quitted the crowded thoroughfares and the neighbourhood of the lower docks; the streets he threaded now were narrow and squalid, and their inhabitants seemed to have quitted them for the nonce for more attractive scenes, for they were almost empty. Presently he came to a creek, crossed by a swing bridge protected only by chains, with a small dock on the landward side. The tide was up, but there was no vessel in it. Not a human being was in sight; the road beyond led on to some marsh land, which no attempt had been made to put to any useful purpose. At this moment Beryl Peyton heard rapid but stealthy footsteps behind him; he turned round with a mechanical impulse, for just then no incident, except so far that it was an interruption to his thoughts, had the slightest interest for him.

It was the Mexican with something gleaming in his hand. The old man faced him without a tremor.

'English devil,' cried the other as he drew near, 'you will tell tales of me no more.'

'You dog with the teeth,' returned the Englishman, 'you will be hung like a dog.'

He had nothing but his walking-stick, and it was by no means a stout one; but it is written even of the peaceful and occasionally fraudulent counter-jumper—being English—that on the approach of a foreign foe he will ‘strike with his yard-wand home;’ and Beryl Peyton was no counter-jumper. A man of courage from his birth, who had been face to face with death, afar from friends and home, half a dozen times, he was not a man to blench from any personal danger, least of all when threatened by a scoundrel. What seems curious, existence, which five minutes before had appeared utterly valueless and a burthen, grew suddenly precious to him. He had no expectation of preserving it, and he would have stooped to beg it of no man living, but he was resolved to sell it dearly. He was old, but the love of life was not dead within him.

It is not in those supreme moments in which are about to be decided the issues of life or death, that sublime thoughts present themselves; in personal combat the Vulgar prevails over the Heroic.

‘At all events I will spoil this blackguard’s beauty for him,’ was the simple but forcible reflection that suggested itself to Beryl Peyton; but as it crossed his mind another thought (to judge by the expression of his face) followed it, caught it, and obliterated it. ‘Mexican dog,’ he cried, ‘look behind you.’

The warning would have been unheeded, or taken as a ruse perhaps, but that at the same moment there was a thunder of footsteps on the wooden bridge. It was the tread of a man, but it sounded like the tramp of a horse; one of those steeds of old, used for strength and not for fleetness, but which for a short course would carry a rider in complete mail at speed in one of those mediæval ‘running-down’ cases which were euphuistically called ‘jousts.’ Against such an antagonist, with his steam up, the slender Mexican, notwithstanding his long knife, would have had no more chance than had Saladin, pitted against the Knight of the Leopard. Before he could turn and face him, this moving tower of a man was upon him, and would have crushed him like that of Siloam had he been so minded. Only not being stone and mortar, but flesh and blood endowed with intelligence, he adopted another method: with one hand he seized the wrist of the Mexican which held the knife, with the other the nape of his neck, and forcing him to the bridge chains toppled him over them into the deep dock, before he had time to complete an execration.

Beryl Peyton folded his arms and looked on with the air of a

satisfied but unexcited spectator who sees beforehand how things must end; nor, till the splash arising from the displacement of the water had died away, did he move or speak. Then he said, with great deliberation and distinctness—

‘Why, Japhet, how came *you* here?’

As quick as words, but with his fingers (for the man was a deaf-mute), came the dumb response, ‘My mistress sent me.’

Beryl Peyton knit his brow.

‘Her commands were, sir,’ the man went on, ‘that I was to be no spy upon your movements, but that I was always to be at hand in case of need.’

‘And how long have you been dogging my footsteps?’

‘I followed you until you entered the shop yonder,’ returned the other, indicating the direction from which he had come, ‘and when you came out I followed that gentleman.’ Here he pointed with a contemptuous finger to the dock beneath.

‘Well, well, my brave fellow, you disobeyed orders, but Nelson did the like; you have saved your master’s life, Japhet,’ and Mr. Peyton held out his hand.

The other, a broad-faced fellow, middle-aged, but with a boyish look, caused by the absence of beard or whisker, which, contrasting with his great bulk, gave him a very peculiar appearance, took his master’s hand and raised it to his lips. The movement so strangely out of character with his appearance was not caused by enthusiasm; it was merely the result of habit, which led him to express all emotions by signs.

‘As to this murderous scoundrel,’ observed the old man quietly, ‘the dock, if it were but at the Old Bailey, would be the very place for him; I suppose, however, one must not leave him to drown.’

‘As you please, sir,’ returned the deaf-mute with a look of indifference. ‘Shall I go in after him?’

‘Certainly not,’ replied the other quickly; ‘I would not risk the loss of my walking-stick for such a cur.’

He leant over the bridge, and looked down into the dock with the same sort of disgust that one might contemplate a sewer with a rat in it.

The wretched Mexican, although, as we know, a magnificent swimmer, had been injured in his fall, and after a vain attempt to keep himself afloat by paddling had contrived to catch hold of a rusty chain that hung down the steep slimy side, for the accommodation of boatmen. He was very quiet, no doubt from the ex-

pectation—judging from what would have been his own conduct had he been in their place—that if discovered to be alive his enemies would make an end of him. Nevertheless, since to let go his hold was to drown, he permitted himself to be dragged up by the chain and deposited on the bridge, where they left him without a word—a pulpy mass attractive only to the paper-maker.

By Mr. Peyton the whole affair seemed at once to be forgotten; as he turned towards home he again fell into gloomy abstraction, and, tired as he needs must have been, would have taken no notice of a wandering cab, which by great good luck they chanced to meet, had not his voiceless henchman drawn his attention to it by touching his arm. ‘I think you have forgotten, sir, that it is the club night.’

‘True, Japhet, true,’ he answered, with a look to the full as grateful as that he had worn on the occasion of the other’s more practical service, and entered the vehicle.

Japhet climbed on the box beside the driver, who, perceiving that he listened with attentive silence to the history of his horse and cab, the narrative of his marriage and widowhood, and many other interesting details of his autobiography, set him down at the journey’s end as ‘one of the right sort’ and ‘excellent company.’

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SEMPITERNAL CLUB.

THE termination of the cab drive was an old-fashioned hotel in Jermyn Street, where Mr. Peyton was accustomed to stay in town in preference to occupying his own residence in Portman Square; a proceeding that would have been considered eccentric in another man, but which in his case awoke no surprise. The days of astonishment among Beryl Peyton’s friends had long been over.

Upon entering his sitting-room an old lady rose from her chair to welcome him, with a quickness and anxiety that contrasted strongly with her age and the general dignity of her appearance. Her hair, like his own, was white as snow, though scarcely whiter than her finely chiselled, aristocratic face, which without doubt would have exhibited those traces of blue blood of which we hear so much and see so little, if there had been any blood in it at all; but there was none. She gave one the impression of one of those unfortunate persons whose appearance has suffered change from calamity, such as suspense or terror. From the tone, however, in

which she spoke it was evident that she had considerable capability for distress of mind still left.

'Oh, Beryl, where have you been? I was beginning to be so nervous about you.'

'Pooh! pooh! I am a little late, wench, that's all.'

He went up to her and kissed her pale cheek. It was no very lordly payment for her having saved his life (which indirectly she had certainly done), but of that of course she was unconscious. All she knew was that, for the first time since her Harry had angered his father beyond forgiveness—now near twenty years ago—her husband had kissed her. She coloured like a girl, and the tears came into her large grey eyes; she knew him too well, however, to permit herself to give way to emotion.

'Your things are all laid out in your dressing-room, Beryl.'

On the very rare occasions when they left home together this was always done, to the great indignation of Derwood, the valet, by Mrs. Peyton's own hands. If her husband would not permit any exhibition of affection on her part, if he could not forgive her the tender sorrow with which she still regarded her dead son's memory, she could at least minister to his needs.

'There is no hurry, Rachel,' returned her husband coldly, as if he already repented of his recent display of feeling; 'I have still twenty minutes in which to dress, and my fellow guests will not be impatient.'

The last words, with which he left her, were delivered with a certain grim pathos which would have been inexplicable to ordinary ears. Mrs. Peyton, however, understood it very well. She sighed heavily, and reseating herself in her chair took from her pocket a note she had received but a few minutes before, but which she had already perused many times.

'Dear Mrs. Peyton,—I am very sorry that I was not at home when you were so good as to call on me. Will you come and take afternoon tea with me at five to-morrow? We shall be quite alone.'

'Yours very truly,

'KATE BECKETT.'

'P.S.—I hear you made some inquiry as to Mrs. Sotheran's protégée. She is no longer with me, having left Park Lane some days ago in consequence of an unfortunate disagreement concerning which I will say at once, in order to relieve your mind, that she attached more importance to it than I did.'

It was strange how such ordinary tidings, and conveyed in such

a conventional style, interested this stately dame. The hand which held her double glasses, and the lips with which, after the manner of old age, she dumbly formed the words, trembled as she read them. Presently her husband's footsteps sounded from the room within; she thrust the note hurriedly into her pocket with an affrighted look and rose once more to greet him. He was in evening dress, but in place of that expectation of boredom, which most people of experience wear who are going out to dinner, his air was grave and full of thought.

'I am going to leave you to dine alone, Rachel,' he said slowly.

'Oh, that is of no consequence,' she answered cheerfully; 'I feel it so kind of you, Beryl, to have brought me with you up to town. It seems quite to revive old days.'

'I hope not,' was the grim rejoinder.

The next moment he was striding across the hall to his carriage, which whirled him rapidly away. It took him to another hotel, but of a very different stamp to the one in Jermyn Street, in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. It had been a fashionable place of residence in the days of sedan chairs and link boys, but was now chiefly used for dining purposes. It was evident that he was expected, for the master of the house was at the door in a moment to receive him, attended by several waiters. He led the way up a broad staircase, handsomely carved, into a large oak-panelled room lit by many wax candles, in which stood a dinner table arranged for a dozen guests. It sparkled with glass and silver, but there were no floral or other ornaments such as would have been found on any modern board of equal pretensions.

'Let Merton wait,' said Mr. Peyton as he took his seat in the chair of honour.

'Merton is dead, sir, I am sorry to say,' returned the landlord with an air less of regret than of reproof, as though such an act on Merton's part had been inconsiderate, to say the least of it.

'Good heavens! is *he* dead too?'

'Well, yes, sir, I am afraid so; but there's Burton—he's used to the club, and perhaps with a couple more, that is all that will be necessary.'

'Mr. Peyton inclined his head in grave assent. It was very desirable that some person should be included in the service in question who was not altogether a stranger to it, for it was a very peculiar one. Although the table, as we have said, was laid for

twelve persons, and the dinner provided for the same number, there was in fact only a single guest—namely, Mr. Beryl Peyton himself. Every dish was handed respectfully on the left of every vacant chair, and was supposed, by no great stretch of the imagination, to be declined. The wine was proffered in a similar manner. Nor did the chairman either eat or drink, as though he would have atoned for the absence of his *convives*. He tasted indeed of everything, and put his lips to each glass, whatever it held, but it was plain that he was only going through the form of dining. His eyes, as they wandered from chair to chair, seemed to picture for him some absent companion, and now and then an unconscious sigh would escape his lips which spoke of regretful memory. Well might he sigh, for every chair was as a tombstone, since each recalled for him a dead friend.

It was fifty years ago since Beryl Peyton, the youngest of that once jovial company, had been admitted a member of the Sempiternal Club, and he had outlived them all. It had been their grim humour never to recruit their ranks, when thinned by death, from the living, and though year after year they had met in diminished numbers, it was *de rigueur*, that, as respected the feast itself, that circumstance should be ignored. Dinner for twelve, as at first, had always been provided, and so far as it lay in wine and mirth to do it, the dwindling board had made head against the enemy. But as, when we get beyond middle life, and our friends who have joined the majority become more numerous than those who still remain with us, matters begin to look serious, so, as the Sempiternal Club grew less and less impervious to the shocks of time and chance, its gatherings became less jovial. The gaps in the double line grew larger and more frequent; the ranks closed up till now the long table stretched before the guestless chairman like a coffin. Last year he had had a single companion of nearly his own age, a man of fashion and of wit, to whom death, like all other things, had been but a subject to make merry with. Where were his gibes, his flashes of merriment now? There was mirth in the room, indeed, though of a very different sort; behind the screen that hid the door Mr. Burton's two assistants would sometimes run on pretence of some official duty, but in reality to interchange their views of a proceeding which was in their eyes irresistibly jocose. 'What a game it is, Bob!' one would whisper (alluding to the chairman's lonesome state, whose game if any game was *solitaire*), and then Bob would stuff his napkin into his mouth and lean against the wall in a paroxysm of

pent-up enjoyment. Mr. Burton, standing immovable behind Mr. Peyton's chair, had higher gifts; nature had intended him for a bishop, but somehow though he had won the apron he had missed the mitre; not a smile betrayed his own emotions, but ever and anon he would catch the eye of one of his myrmidons in the act of offering still hock to some invisible guest, and wink with such an intensity of appreciation as drove the other to the very verge of a guffaw.

To a looker-on this vulgar by-play would have only made the sepulchral scene more sad by depriving it of its decencies. The central figure, however, was quite unconscious of it, and sat wrapped in thoughts too deep for words; he was in the world, but no longer of it, clasping the hands that had long been dust and listening to the voices that were beyond the stars.

When the cloth in old-fashioned way had been removed, and the claret jugs had been placed on the shining table—each double, jug and shadow—the chairman exclaimed, 'Withdraw;' whereupon the servants left him. One of them, I am sorry to say (indeed, I should shrink from mentioning it had not the matter become afterwards of some consequence), still kept his eye on him through the keyhole; otherwise he was literally alone. After a moment or two he rose, glass in hand; his eye glanced round the table with a very sorrowful expression, and he murmured, 'To the memory of the dead.' His mind was with them though his body was above the earth, not under it, as theirs were. The freethinkers, the scholars, the wits, with whom he had conversed a hundred times on 'fate, freewill, foreknowledge, absolute,' had all gone to the place where doubts are resolved for ever. Some had thought there was no hereafter, others that there might be a future world; now all but himself knew that there was one and what it was like. By the time he joined them (so the fancy struck him) they would all have been accustomed to their position, just as some of them in going to college had preceded him from school. What strange things would they have to tell him; or would they be forbidden to tell him anything?

His thoughts strayed back through a long vista of years, of which, by that strange inversion to which human memory is subject, the later were the least clear while the earlier had the distinctness of yesterday. They were in connection with 'the Club' alone, and quite free from that painful matter which had seized his mind that afternoon. His son had had nothing to do with the club; and if he knew of its existence at all had set down

its members as 'old fogies' not worthy of the attention of a man of spirit. But to Mr. Peyton they were not old fogies. Once more they were young; some of them handsome, all of them wealthy. Life lay before them, as it had been laid before himself, full of pleasures that seemed inexhaustible; the cup of enjoyment had been then but tasted, and now it was emptied to the dregs—to the very dregs.

The old man leant forward with his head upon his hand, and in the heart of the polished board caught sight of his own hoary face.

Good heavens! how different were those features from those it had first reflected.

Oh, youth, for years so many and sweet
'Tis known that you and I were one;
I'll deem it but a fond conceit,
I cannot think that thou art gone,

sings the poet, but his imagination did not avail him; how far less, then, can it avail those who are no poets? It was a very bitter hour.

As a rule Beryl Peyton was not given to retrospection, save when that one cross in his life of which we know was thrust upon his attention, but present circumstances were so striking and peculiar that they mastered his mind and compelled it to review the past. He had been essentially a man of action—not much of a reader, though somewhat (in a vague way) of a thinker—and in his youth the creature of impulse. On the whole his impulses had been good. Of late years, indeed, his life had been passed in acts of benevolence. They were not, however, those of Christian charity, as it is generally understood. At the bottom of them there lay a certain desire to redress the wrongs which Fate imposed upon his fellow-creatures, and, however good in themselves, his doings had had something of egotism and even of arrogance. It pleased him to play the part of a small providence, and he did so with the secret conviction that his system was an improvement upon that of the Great Original—an opinion not unexampled among the very rich, though by no means so common as the idea that everything is for the very best and needs no mending.

He could lay his hand upon his heart and honestly say that he had designedly wronged no man; and even as to woman he had not much to answer for. The consideration of personal merit,

however, as regarded any reward or punishment that might be awaiting him, did not much trouble him. He had been so long not only a law unto himself, but a lawgiver, the hinge on which the interests of so many others turned, that the idea of his own subordination to any higher power rarely intruded. What was most importunate with him just now was the feeling of isolation. This was partly owing, no doubt, to the sense that he had over-lived his contemporaries, but not wholly so. While we have those who sympathise with us, no matter to what generation they belong, we are not isolated. But Beryl Peyton was one by himself. He had indeed his wife, who in regard for him might almost be termed a devotee, but there was a shadow between them; he knew that she cherished in secret a memory that was hateful to him. He had clients by the score, and protégés not a few, but he had no friends. He stood alone in the world, and, worse than all, when he should fall, which in the course of nature must needs be soon, there was none to reign in his stead. And this—though he would never have owned it even to himself, since it would have given the victory to his enemy—was his bitterest thought of all. It has been said, indeed, by a philosopher, ‘Why regret the being forgotten, since before you lived the world went on quite well without you?’—a question that is unanswerable. Only most of us are not philosophers, but merely men and women.

CHAPTER XX.

‘TIDMAN’S.’

THERE are two signs by which, in all human habitations, the want of ready money in the proprietor may be always recognised: the one is fustiness, the other is skimpiness. In the former case there may be plenty of furniture; the beds will be bigger than they need be, each with a surplusage of curtains and four gigantic posts, the original use of which is fast fading from the mind of man. (A time will come when they will only be remembered by the metaphor ‘in the twinkling of a bed post,’ and annotators will cudgel their brains in vain to explain what even *that* meant.) The carpets, though threadbare, are plentiful; the doors which do not close tightly are lined with list to remedy that defect; the chairs, though rickety and castorless, are well cushioned: to the

eye, in short, in such places everything is fairly comfortable, but the air is rather difficult to breathe. Flue is everywhere; there is a general flavour of mustiness, and when you open a window, the one way to keep it open—for the sash comes down again like a guillotine—is to break it.

The second case is of a wholly different kind: 'fustiness' is the characteristic of old fashion, 'skimpiness' of new. When a new house is out at elbows it does not suffer from want of ventilation; it may be clean as a lighthouse, though the damp is not always so entirely confined to the outside, but a dreadful air of incompleteness and insufficiency pervades it.

This was unfortunately what was the matter with Tidman's Private Hotel, Holloway, where Mary Marvon had taken up her quarters on the recommendation of Mr. Rennie. Why it was called a 'private hotel,' except for the reason that causes Mr. Smith to call himself Mr. Smythe, it was difficult to conjecture. It had no night chamberlain, no waiter, nor even any resident Boots. The whole work of the house, and it was a large one, was done by Mr. Tidman and two 'slaveys,' hired maidens of tender years. They had also to wait upon Mrs. Tidman, who was 'a lady in her own right,' as her husband termed it, the first cousin of a baronet, the niece of a member of Parliament, and a person altogether superior to her surroundings. It was for her sake that Tidman dubbed his establishment 'Private Hotel,' as being less obtrusively connected with the licensed victualling interest than 'hotel' pure and simple, while it was more genteel than 'boarding house;' but boarding house it was, and that of a very unambitious kind. No wine was sold on the premises, a circumstance which, combined with a positive interdict upon tobacco, restricted Tidman's guests to members of the female sex; while, on the other hand, it justified the proprietor in applying to his establishment the encomium of 'exclusive.' The guests were mostly permanencies. Folks did not come to 'Tidman's' by misadventure; they did not, on finding Claridge's full, fall back discontentedly in their barouches with C springs and murmur, 'Try Tidman's.' Tidman's had a connection of its own, mostly among country ladies of limited means, and was never 'tried' though it was sometimes found wanting. The two Misses Blithers, of Bath, for example, who at present occupied its principal apartments, used to turn up their noses at some of its bedroom arrangements; Miss Fandango, of the West India Islands, who talked of them as if they belonged to her, and who had certainly an hereditary estate on one of them, though it

was doubtful if it had anything on it, used to smile bitterly at the brown sugar which did *not* remind her of her native clime. It was in the case of these detractors that the uses of the lady of the house (which would otherwise have remained unsuspected) became manifest. She would inform the Misses Blithers, upon the personal authority of a first cousin of a baronet, that green blinds were not essential to the furniture of a first-class bedroom, and that the early sunshine, though it might stream through their windows and wake them at 5 A.M., was upon the whole an advantage recognised by the aristocracy and recommended by the most fashionable physicians; while, as the niece by marriage of the representative of one of the largest commercial constituencies in England, she was able to inform Miss Fandango that the finest crystallised sugar, though fair to see, but too often sacrificed its saccharine qualities to mere appearance. These were the only boarders that at present ventured to complain. Mrs. Tiffin, the Indian widow on the second floor, took what was given her without a murmur, though she inadvertently gave offence on one occasion when a brown compound was handed to her at dinner, of which she innocently observed, 'This is very nice, but I do wonder, Mrs. Tidman, that you never go in for curries.' To which the lady of the house rejoined in an icy tone, 'I do not know what you mean, my dear madam, by "going in," because it is a phrase that is not used in the best circles; but our cook is thought to have some talent for the dish you mention and of which you have just partaken.'

The unfortunate Mrs. Tiffin had placed herself in the inextricable position of having eaten curry without knowing it.

These three were at present the only guests in the Tidman household, to which Mary Marvon was therefore welcomed all the more gladly, albeit the recommendation of Mr. Rennie would have ensured her a prompt reception in any case. A clean and airy room was allotted her on the third floor, commanding a view of at least one thousand chimney-pots and the towers of a jail. Instead of the glass wardrobe of her Park Lane bower there was a chest of drawers with two hang-nails, and a little mirror which, perhaps from motives of modesty, declined except upon compulsion to be looked at, and always swung with its face to the wall. The floor was bare save in the centre, where a strip of carpet, such as is used by street acrobats, left a free opportunity for parquetry round its margin.

There was but one chair, but even 'the highest in the land,' as Mrs. Tidman (meaning, I suppose, 'the broadest') pointed

out and corroborated by her personal testimony, could only sit on one chair at a time; and though there was no table there was a capital mantle-piece, where one could put anything one pleased within certain limits as to weight and area. What pleased Mary most, however, was the fact that there was plenty of room for the type-writing machine which Mr. Rennie had undertaken to procure for her on favourable terms, and by which she intended to earn her livelihood. It was a very humble ambition, but, like all aspirations after honest work, a very self-sustaining one. It enabled her not indeed to forget but to ignore her misfortunes. It even caused her to reflect that the dream in which she had suffered herself to indulge with respect to Edgar Dornay had been not only baseless but unreasonable, and that though he had not behaved well to her, the punishment which had been inflicted on her was not undeserved. In the desire which now consumed her to make a few shillings a day by manual labour she recognised the absurdity of her late pretensions, and beheld the width of the gulf between her and him. It had been very unlike her to have ever lost sight of it; not that she herself attached importance to social distinctions, but because she so well understood their value in the eyes of others; for the future she would bear in mind that her private views on that matter were exceptional, and did not one whit alter her own position as respected the rest of the world. On the other hand they did give her some advantage. Not even misfortune can make us philosophic at one-and-twenty, but she was enabled to regard matters objectively and from without. Instead of being depressed by the social atmosphere in which she now found herself, she was roused by it.

Mrs. Tidman's reminiscences of the great, the magnificence of the elder Miss Blithers, and the airs and graces of Miss Fandango amused her exceedingly. To some girls in her position their patronage—for they all patronised her—would have been intolerable; Mary Marvon, however, was far from resenting it; she understood that it was a form of kindness—unfortunately the only one that occurred to them—and it tickled her sense of humour. Human nature is the same play, whether performed in some barn in the provinces or at Her Majesty's Theatre, and life at Tidman's Boarding House, except for the accessories, was, she soon grew to understand, only Park Lane over again. Unhappily it is not until we reach middle life—and sometimes, alas! not even then—that we thoroughly appreciate this fact. We are always fancying that on this or that landing of the great

social stairs matters must be different, and that the higher we get the nearer we approach to heaven.

What poor Mary felt most acutely was, strange to say, the same pain that Beryl Peyton, her antipodes in the matter of wealth and station, was suffering from—the sense of isolation. One must be a humourist indeed to enjoy to the full the weaknesses of one's fellow-creatures without a soul to share our harmless pleasures; for the cynic it is easy enough, but poor Mary was no cynic. When she ceased to take an interest in what was passing around her, and permitted herself to think, she was very unhappy. She had not been accustomed to the joys of home. The love of father and mother, of sister and brother, had been denied her; but she had hitherto not been without friends. At school she had formed several attachments to girls of her own age, which, though they are scoffingly spoken of as 'eternal,' at least last their time and fulfil their office. A girl without a girl friend is not to be envied; a boy stands upon a different footing, for there are some boys, and those of a fine type, who postpone their friendships till a later date, or, what is more common, attach themselves to their seniors on comparatively equal terms; whereas between a young girl and a grown woman there may be affection, admiration, respect, or what you will, but never friendship.

Upon leaving school Mary had felt the pangs of separation from more than one loving heart, but the way to her affections was easy, and Mrs. Beckett soon found it, and though she could not supply the place of the companions of her own age, had mitigated their loss. Now she had lost both them and her, while even her kind protectress, Mrs. Sotheran, had somehow ceased to occupy the position she had once held in her regard. She was grateful to her for the personal tenderness she had always exhibited, but she no longer stood to her in the place of a mother; she was only the almoner of those from whose hands, had the alternative been offered to her, she would have accepted nothing. Perhaps also a false shame tended to increase this feeling of separation from the only person who, to her knowledge, possessed the secret of her birth. On the whole Mary's sense of loneliness was very keen, and it was certainly not mitigated by being in the populous waste of London.

It was impossible under such circumstances, being young and very human, but that she should take an interest in what of life lay nearest to her; such is the law of nature save with misanthropes and monsters; if we are alone to-day, some tie, however

slight—the interchange of a nod, a smile, a word of common courtesy—binds us to some fellow-creature to-morrow. The object of attraction in this case was Mr. Tidman—a little grey man, as weird to look at as the hero of a German legend, but as alert and active as a German waiter. Its cause was his capacity for work, which in her present condition of mind was a somewhat exaggerated virtue in Mary's eyes, if not the very highest good. In the Tidman household the order of things as it generally exists in such establishments, where the mistress is the breadwinner and the master the pipe-smoker, was reversed. Mrs. Tidman was a mere drawing-room ornament of the establishment, frail though chaste; her husband, Atlas-like, supported the whole of it upon his shoulders, but with such ease and dexterity that he seemed rather to balance it upon his head, his nose, his chin. There was no domestic duty too trivial or too menial for him to undertake. He did not indeed make the beds, though, as the elder Miss Blithers observed, after a snubbing administered to her by the lady of the house, he had made his own bed and had to lie on it; but he did not disdain to light the fires when negligence or inattention had caused their extinction. He did all the catering for the house, and 'saw to' things which eye of mortal man had never 'seen to' before. He superintended the arrangements for the laundress, and knew the times and seasons when the lace curtains should be substituted for the chintz. He laid the dinner table, when Jane and Ann were behind their time, with a celerity that would have taken the breath away from Mrs. Beckett's butler even to look at it, emphasising each knife and fork as he laid them down, as though he were selling the goodwill of the establishment by auction with every blow. And whatever he did was accompanied by ceaseless talk, delivered at the top of his voice, whether his audience was up three pairs of stairs, or at his elbow.

So much vigour and energy it would have been difficult to find in one individual, and they were accompanied by a humility that was unexampled. 'I am nothing, I ain't,' he would assure the astonished Mary when she complimented him on these Briarean performances, 'and when I think of Matilda Jane' (his wife) 'I feel something wus than nothing.' He clipped his words terribly, not so much from vulgarity (though he had probably never had more than a bowing acquaintance with Lindley Murray) as from extreme volubility. 'She was a born lady, as you know.' (Mary did know. No one who had been under that roof for twenty-

four hours—nay, for twenty-four minutes—could have failed to have heard of it), ‘but she married a pauper. She was a Blenkinhouse, own niece to the late Sir Anthony Blenkinhouse, of the Manor, Slopton, and cousin to the present Sir Geoffrey. As sure as Christmas comes she is asked every year to the Manor and received as one of the family. Of course they don’t ask *me*; that would be a pretty thing indeed. Why, none of them does a stroke of work—haven’t for centuries; wasn’t born to it, you know—and breakfast not on the table till ten o’clock. Then by the mother’s side Matilda Jane is connected with the Beckbirds. John Beckbird, the member for Lattenborough, is her cousin only twice removed. When they come up to town they always send their carriage for her once every season to drive her round and round in the Park. It would be enough to turn some people’s heads for them, but not Matilda Jane; she’s a paragon, she is.’ And then the excellent fellow would set to work upon whatever employment he was engaged in with redoubled energy, as though the recollection of his wife’s relations had given him new strength.

For persons of great natural stateliness like Miss Blithers the elder, or who stood on their dignity like Miss Fandango, Mr. Tidman was too quick in his movements. He would rush round the dinner table, and anticipate their wants with the pepper castor or the mustard pot, in a manner which would have been flattering if it had not been so precipitate. He was dexterous—that is to say, he never upset the articles—but he banged them down with a noise and sharpness that suggested the explosion of a percussion cap. The maids handed the dishes, but if his vigilant eye perceived a guest wanted anything he would shriek out the name of it interrogatively, ‘Bread?’ ‘Beer?’ ‘Potatoes?’ as in some energetic juvenile game, and supply the demand upon the instant, before it could be indicated by utterance. It was his excusable boast, though expressed in somewhat vulgar language, that when anything was wanted he was ‘all there;’ and indeed he reminded Mary of the poet’s Abra, who would come not only without bell-ringing but ‘ere you called her name; and if you called another Abra came,’ which happened indeed with Mr. Tidman very often when Jane and Ann were not in the way.

Perhaps his greatest performance in point of despatch was the saying grace, which he never failed to do before the two chief meals of the day; such had been the custom, as his wife assured him, at the Manor, Slopton, and it was only respectful, as he most readily admitted, to the memory of Sir Anthony (who *had* left her

ten pounds to buy a mourning ring with) to keep it up. Only Sir Anthony probably had taken very much longer about his grace. The spirit and not the letter is fortunately what is of importance in such cases, but no one of Tidman's lodgers had ever yet heard what he said on these occasions. This was not, however, because attention was not called to it. Mr. Tidman commanded it by a violent drumming on the table with the handle of his knife and fork, murmured some rapid and inarticulate words, and without a moment's pause pointed the blade of the carving knife to his right-hand neighbour with the inquiry, 'Beef?' It was like that dreadful 'drawing-room game' where somebody throws a handkerchief in your face and cries out, 'Fire!' Sometimes there was an alternative, such as 'Beef or Mutton?' and the guests had to decide in such a hurry that there was no time except for regret. Mr. Tidman completed the whole round of the table, keeping count as he went, 'One, two, three,' &c., and filled every-one's plate without the least attention to a genteel request for a small piece. Then he threw every one two roast potatoes, directed to their plates with great precision, and rushed round the table begging every one with pathetic importunity to eat 'greens.' 'What! not so much? Couldn't think of such a thing, Miss Blithers. You must; they're beautiful greens. They always take greens at the Manor, Slopton, do they not, Mrs. Tidman?'

Thus appealed to, the languid and aristocratic Mrs. Tidman, startled from a genteel repose, would somewhat inconsequentially remark that at the Manor, Slopton, there was a beautiful greenhouse with more cucumbers in it than the family could eat, and that Sir Anthony had been wont to keep three gardeners, at the remembrance of which hereditary magnificence she would utter a gentle sigh.

'My wife was like one of those exotics herself,' Mr. Tidman would break in explanatorily, like a Greek chorus, 'reared, as you may say, in the lap of luxury. I transplanted her to a very different soil; yet here she is, you see, as ornamental as ever. To mark Mrs. Tidman as she folded her white hands and shook her head deprecatingly at this compliment was to behold a picture of humility—though of the cottage-with-the-double-coach-house order—in a style of very high art indeed. Her husband's humility was of another sort; he had red hands, and was not unfrequently in a perspiration, so that he did not lend himself to pictorial illustration; but what there was of him was

genuine. His hospitality, indeed, so rare in a boarding-house keeper, was almost that of the savage in its importunity. 'Can't eat any more, miss?' he would expostulate with Mary, who, to say the truth, had very little appetite in those days. 'Oh, you must. I shan't take No. I want to fatten you.'

He spoke like an ogre, but he meant nothing but good to her and good to all about him.

It is generally supposed that being 'knocked about' in the world—not 'knocking about,' for that is quite another thing, which you do in your steam yacht or in your own carriage with a courier—'knocks the nonsense' out of you. Perhaps it may do so, but I have noticed that a good many other things, such as gentleness, and generosity, and all consideration for other people, are also often eliminated in the process; whereas Mr. Tidman, who had been most grievously knocked about (in the bankruptcy and county courts among other places), had contrived to retain those attributes and, what was still more astounding, his native simplicity. He was not very clever in keeping out of scrapes, it must be confessed, nor was London the best place for the development of his energies. He never complained, but his ardent desire (which there was no hope of being gratified) was for the country and fresh air. His physical activity was superhuman. If his superfluous force could have been stored, it would have been a treasure to science, and might have instituted perpetual motion in itself without any further waste of time as to the discovery of it. What became of it Huxley only knows; it was some satisfaction to be assured by science that it could not be lost; but within the limits of his private hotel Tidman spent his powers in vain, or to little purpose, like some gigantic squirrel making ten thousand revolutions per minute in a canary cage.

In this personage, as we have said, Mary took a great deal of interest. If the plain truth was to be told, I think we should find that not only the philosophers who 'thread the labyrinth of the mind, and read the secret of the star,' but those who 'observe' the toad (without a thought of the precious jewel in his head, but simply for information), or who 'cultivate' the bee (sometimes in their bonnets), are not very liable to social temptations; they have either discovered the deceitfulness of love and the vanity of pleasure, or have no natural taste for them; and Mary perhaps 'observed' Mr. Tidman (though not under the microscope, for he was extremely obvious to the naked eye) because she had little else to do. She shrank from her own thoughts and welcomed

any distraction from them, whereas the society of her fellow-lodgers, and especially that of the mistress of the house, compelled them into the old channel.

Mrs. Tidman was importunate to be informed how matters had been conducted in Park Lane, and would point out, with pathetic earnestness how similarly the wheel of life had revolved at the Manor, Slopton. At the same time she did not hesitate to hint that she herself had not been the fly on the wheel, as Mary had been, but its chief motive power.

'Poor Sir Anthony,' she was wont to sigh, 'did nothing without me, and it was a curious coincidence that he died within less than three years after my marriage with Theodore.'

Then the other ladies would shake their heads at Mr. Tidman, who would observe significantly, 'Quite true, ladies,' in corroboration of his wife's evidence, as though the guilt of blood in hastening the demise of a baronet of the United Kingdom had really been upon his soul. No doubt it had been hard upon Sir Anthony, for his niece was two-and-thirty years of age when she had eloped, and he must naturally have calculated upon keeping her with him for the rest of his life.

The cross-examination to which Mary was subjected as to what Miss Blithers called the 'convenances' of fashionable life was in its particularity and detail not unworthy of a court of law. 'I have been accustomed to pretty good society myself,' that lady would modestly remark, 'but there is one thing that puzzles me: in the very highest circles do they, or do they not, wear gloves at breakfast?'

'My sister of course means the ladies,' put in Miss Julia. She never originated a remark, but was very good at corroborations and deductions when a subject was once started.

'I can only say that Mrs. Beckett didn't wear gloves at breakfast,' said Mary smiling.

'Now I call that very satisfactory and conclusive,' said Miss Blithers, nodding and looking around her as if she had been the humble means of establishing an important fact.

'Conclusive so far as it goes,' remarked Mrs. Tidman. 'But we must remember, if Miss Marvon will permit me to say so, that Mrs. Beckett, though no doubt a lady of great wealth and position, did not belong to the titled aristocracy. Now at the Manor, Slopton, Lady Theresa Blenkinhouse, my uncle's second wife (she was the Earl of Stoppington's daughter), always wore gloves at breakfast.'

‘What! even in hot weather?’ exclaimed Mrs. Tiffin with simplicity.

‘In all weathers,’ replied Mrs. Tidman with dignity. ‘Good heavens! do you suppose that a person of Lady Thetesa’s rank suffered from chilblains?’

This was hard upon Mrs. Tiffin, who did suffer from them, and so severely that she went about the house from September till May in woollen gloves and list slippers; but upon questions of social rank and the tables of degree Mrs. Tidman was merciless. Mrs. Tiffin was dreadfully abashed. Miss Fandango, however, who suffered, though in secret, from the same complaint as Mrs. Tiffin, perhaps from having been accustomed, like herself, to a tropical climate, was stung into antagonism. ‘After all,’ she said, ‘the aristocracy of England, whether titled or untitled, have no such conception of what it is to be a privileged class as have our great families in the West Indies. I am speaking, indeed, somewhat of the past and olden times.’

Mrs. Tidman uttered an ejaculation which cannot be here set down; not of course that it was improper, but because it was inarticulate; it had, however, a significance of contempt equal to a folio. ‘I say in the old times,’ repeated Miss Fandango with a glow of indignation upon her dusky cheek, but in faltering tones, for, though naturally intrepid, she quailed before Mrs. Tidman. Like the savage, with bow and spear or the faithful and returning boomerang, she had at first done battle with her more civilised enemy with a light heart; but, having experienced the effect of the other’s weapons of precision, she now feared the contest.

‘I repeat,’ continued Miss Fandango, ‘that the fine spirit of feudalism was kept up in my native land to an extent undreamt of in England. My grandfather had five hundred slaves, male and female—not in livery, it is true, far from it—but all devoted to his sovereign will.’

‘Disgraceful,’ murmured Miss Blithers.

‘You may say that,’ corroborated Mrs. Tiffin, directing to her hostess a frowning and significant smile that promised a whole budget of colonial information as the price of pardon.

‘If I am snapped up in this manner and not permitted to go on,’ protested Miss Fandango, ‘argument is impossible.’

‘No one wishes to stop discussion,’ observed Mrs. Tidman majestically, ‘but I cannot at *my* table permit any indecorous allusions.’

‘Gracious Goodness!’ ejaculated poor Miss Fandango, ‘what do you mean?’

‘I think we had better drop the subject,’ said Mrs. Tidman severely. ‘Theodore, what was I saying about Sir Anthony?’

It was one of Mr. Tidman’s multifarious duties to act as a remembrancer in ordinary to his wife, and to recall to her recollection, which was weak, what she had last said, but on the present occasion he had seized the opportunity of discussion among the ladies to bury himself in pudding. He had few chances of undisturbed enjoyment with his knife and fork (for I regret to say he was using both), but, when they came, he took advantage of them. He was dimly aware that West Indian slavery was the subject of discussion, but guiltily conscious of inattention.

‘Theodore, what was I talking about?’ repeated his spouse in more decided tones.

Mary noticed his embarrassment and whispered good-naturedly, ‘Gloves.’

‘Why, let me see,’ returned Mr. Tidman with an effort of memory, ‘the last thing you said, my dear, was that Sir Anthony’s slaves in the West Indian Islands—or words to that effect—always wore gloves at breakfast.’

CHAPTER XXI.

A SYMPATHISER.

ON the second day after Mary’s arrival at ‘Tidman’s’ came the type-writer, which amid these unsympathetic surroundings was a relief to her indeed. I have heard a young lady describe the delight with which, from one of those excellent persons who live for others, a rich bachelor uncle, she received her first piano. A box of good things to the schoolboy, when half the term was gone and all his pocket money, was as nothing, she assured me, compared with that box of harmony. But even out of a piano, unless you perform on it in a very superior manner, you cannot get your living. Now to Mary’s eyes the great charm of her new acquisition was that, like Pandora’s box, there was hope in it, and possibly independence. It is probable that the great majority of my readers are unacquainted with this ingenious invention, which is the more to be regretted since I cannot explain it to them. Machinery of all kinds is unintelligible to me, and the endeavour to understand it

always results in vertigo. When it revolves my brain begins to do the same, and that is the only point we have in sympathy. The instrument, however, is a circular affair with type at the end of wires, which start up like the hammers of a piano and print things a great deal more distinctly than some people write. There is a keyboard, and keys, which are letters, which require a sharp tap with the fingers. These are arranged in detachments for the right and left hand, but not—and this is the *crux*—in their alphabetical order. They are divided as equally as possible in relation to their probable use, so that each hand, or rather finger of each hand, may have the same amount of work to do. A proficient can play it like the piano, only with twice the rapidity; for my part (but then I am not clever, and have had but five years' practice), I pick out the keys laboriously with one digit, and generally wrong. There is no royal road to the type-writer, nor to some people any road at all; but for women whose touch is delicate, and sight is keen, the task comes easy. In the first quarter of an hour Mary contrived to print her own name, MARY MARVON, pretty correctly; and before the afternoon was over could turn out a sentence of ten words in as many minutes. This she accomplished with both hands; if she had used one (as instinct prompted her to do) she would have got on twice as quickly, and would have remained an ignoramus at it for life.

It was marvellous what pleasure—if pleasure is relief from pain—this close mechanical toil afforded her, for, being such a novice, while she worked at it she could think of nothing else. What a divine Nepenthe is work and hope. Gin and beer, though a much more popular mixture, is nothing to it, while though the brandy recommended by the philosopher for heroes may be more excellent for *them*, for others its effect is deleterious. As these obstinate letters grew tame under Mary's touch, they began to spell for her, if not 'comfort,' at least 'oblivion.' She forgot the stigma of her birth, which whenever she thought of it pained her in the cruelest manner, for though she was proud, poor girl, she was not 'too proud to care from whence she came.' She forgot her lost love and his treachery—or rather his weakness, for her generous nature accused him of nothing worse. She forgot her disagreement with Mrs. Beckett, the only friend of her own sex she had in London. Nay, more than all (for this is the very crown of honest toil), when she had done her work, she felt stronger to fight and fitter to endure whatever harsh Fate might have in store for her; nor was even that faculty for the enjoyment of pleasure which

work especially bestows denied her, though she looked forward to no opportunity for its exercise. Late in the afternoon a visitor called upon her, and was shown into the room set apart for such private interviews, and admirably adapted for its purpose. There was no external object in it which by grace or beauty was likely to distract the mind, save one solitary picture, limned by a departed lodger (and left, it was whispered, in part payment of her account) of the Tidmans' establishment itself. Genius had glorified it, though it had failed in making it quite perpendicular. It was represented as a palatial structure, with a carriage and four driving up to the door and two ladies driving away from it in a *barouche*; that they meant to return again was subtly indicated by the artist from the fact of their being without luggage.

From a first glance at the apartment one would have said, 'This is devoted to hair-cutting,' but by an ingenious and inexpensive device originality was preserved. There was no mirror, and in place of the florid paper that generally embellishes the bower of the *coiffeur* the walls were (or had been) of pure white.

Mary's visitor, on finding himself alone, looked round him with an intense expression of wonder and disgust, and, moved by some association of ideas, exclaimed, 'By Gad! remanded!'

Mr. Charles Sotheran had once had occasion to visit some one 'in trouble' in a certain Government establishment, whom he had found in an apartment exactly similar. In that case there had been nothing surprising in it; but to think that the house that had its room of state thus bare and wretched, with ground glass for windows and oil cloth for carpet, should be the dwelling of Mary Marvon, fresh from the splendours of Park Lane, was amazing to him. The next moment, however, the gloom of the apartment was dispelled by the entrance of a sunbeam.

'Oh, Charley, how kind this is of you!'

Considering their mutual position, and the necessity for keeping him at arm's length for his own sake, perhaps she should not have welcomed him so effusively; but for days Mary Marvon had seen no friendly face, and Charley's was such a bright one.

'Kind of me!' he echoed, holding out an eager hand, 'kind of me!' If you only knew what pleasure it gives me!'

'Does it indeed?' she smiled, already conscious of her indiscretion; 'then you must be easily pleased, Charley. This is not exactly a pleasure house, at all events of the *Kubla Khan* description, is it?'

'I don't care the least about the house,' returned the young man significantly.

'Now that I call rude, Charley; for though *I* may speak disrespectfully of Tidman's, it is not for *you* to do so; it will probably be my place of residence for some time to come.'

'I am very sorry to hear it,' observed Charley gloomily. 'What are those papers under your arm? They look like law documents.'

'They *are* law documents, sir,' replied Mary with dignity.

'They are not title deeds of the establishment? You are not thinking of buying it, I do hope?'

'You are a very impertinent young man. They are pleadings.'

'Good heavens! Portia?'

'Yes; I have adopted that line of business.'

'Happy Antonio!' murmured Charley; 'still more happy Bassanio!'

'I do not, however, go into court. Mr. Rennie has sent me the papers—no, not for my opinion, sir, though I don't see why you should smile at *that*, but to be copied out. I thought you would like to see how I was getting on in my new profession. What do you think of that as a specimen of handwriting?'

'But it's print,' exclaimed Charley—'at least a sort of print.'

'Thank you, sir,' she replied with a sweeping curtsy; 'it is, as you say, though with no exaggeration of admiration, a sort of print. I printed it with my type-writer.'

'Shade of Spottiswoode! But what did you do it for?'

'That is a question, sir, between me and my employer; but, if you must know, for sixpence a folio. At my rate of speed the first day I calculated I might make a shilling a week by it; at that of yesterday, five shillings. I believe with a little practice, and without working what we call in the trade 'overtime'—besides having my "Sundays out" (another technical term), I shall be able to earn quite a large income.'

Charley's face was very sad and pitiful as he replied, in a tone that was in marked contrast with her own studiously gay and playful one, 'This is very strange news, Mary. Can I see this wonderful piece of mechanism?'

'No, sir, you cannot. The fact is that Tidman's, though admirably adapted for social life and intercourse, is on the American system so far as private sitting-rooms are concerned.'

'Good heavens! Then do you actually work in your own room, Mary, hour after hour at this what-you-may-call-it?'

'Type-writer, if you please.'

'At this type-writer, for the wages of a seamstress?'

'Do I look like it, you silly boy?

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,

and so on. You are certainly not in a very complimentary humour.'

Charley rose from his chair and began to pace the room.

'You don't know how it pains me, Mary, to hear of your working in this way.'

'You mean of my working at all,' she answered, smiling, though far from untouched by his artless pity; 'that is because you are in Government employment. Now, for my part, I like work.'

'Some people do, I know,' admitted the young man. 'Browne in our office—Browne with the *e*, as we used to call him, to distinguish him from squinting Brown, "Brown with the eye"—was very fond of work; he is now in a lunatic asylum. Mr. Beryl Peyton—a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind, you know—took a great interest in him in his retirement. By-the-bye, Mrs. Peyton was inquiring after you only yesterday, Mary.'

'After *me*? I did not know she had ever heard of me.'

'Nor I. She did, however, make very particular inquiries. She had been to call in Park Lane, and I suppose Mrs. Beckett had told her about you.'

'Perhaps,' said Mary stiffly.

'I know it's not a pleasant subject,' said Charley gently; 'but I wanted to say a few words to you about Mrs. Beckett. It won't annoy you, will it, Mary?'

The frequency with which he employed her Christian name was rather marked; he felt a pleasure, so subtle that he was hardly conscious of it, both in the utterance of the word by his own lips and in the hearing of it.

'No,' she answered, 'it will not annoy me,' then added with feminine inconsistency, 'since I suppose you have some reason for it?'

'Yes, I have. I know—everybody knows—that Mrs. Beckett has behaved badly to you, Mary.'

'I never said so.'

'Of course not; you never say anything severe of any one except to their faces.'

Here he smiled in spite of himself, for he felt that in that sentence he was somewhat anticipating matters; the only person to whom he had ever known Mary distinctly antagonistic was to Mr. Ralph Dornay. He had seen her 'sit upon him,' to use Charley's own expression, 'rather heavily' more than once.

'I know nothing of the cause of quarrel between you and Mrs. Beckett,' he went on, 'except that you were in the right; but I now know this, that she was in a position at that time in which considerable allowance should be made for her. She must have been troubled in her mind as to a certain course of action which, moreover, she was quite aware would not meet with your approval. You don't know what has happened since you left Park Lane, I conclude?'

'No harm to Mrs. Beckett, I hope?' returned Mary earnestly. 'I wish her nothing but good.'

'I am sure of that, and, what is more to the purpose, I think she is sure of it also. However, to my tale, as narrators say in books. Mrs. Beckett is contemplating a change in her position which, you will agree with me, is, to say the least of it, an injudicious one. She is going to marry Dornay.'

Mary did not reply, nor could she have done so had reply been necessary; she leant back in her chair with lips and eyelids closed like one dead, but her heart was beating fast. To think that the man to whom she had given it a few days ago should have thus bartered himself to another for gold—though she was aware that he had had the intention of doing so—was a terrible blow.

'I knew it would shock you,' continued Charley gently. 'Your opinion of Ralph Dornay coincides, I know, with mine. The man is little better than an adventurer.'

'That is rather a strong term,' said Mary gently. It is remarkable how good news—personal satisfaction, indeed, of all kinds—inclines us to be charitable. As regarded herself Mary had given up all thoughts of Edgar Dornay; he was as one dead to her, though, alas! not forgotten; yet the knowledge that he was not to become Mrs. Beckett's husband—that it was uncle Ralph and not nephew Edgar who had been chosen—was an intense relief to her.

It is in this that men and women, save in a few exceptional cases, are so different. 'If she be not fair for me, what care I how fair she be' (or, for that matter, 'what the deuce becomes of her')? is the man's thought. The woman's thought is different. It is one thing to be deserted, and quite another to feel that the deserter has

enlisted elsewhere. That he has been seduced from his allegiance by the bounty money given by the enemy is small comfort.

'I confess that I have not a high opinion of Mr. Ralph Dornay,' Mary went on; 'people, however, are the best judges of their own affairs.'

'I don't think women are,' said Charley boldly.

'A person of your years and experience of course ought to know,' said Mary drily. She had quite recovered herself by this time, and was prepared to defend herself as well as other people.

'Mrs. Beckett at all events may urge that plea,' said Charley, smiling.

Mary had baffled him, but he was not the least put out. He had always good-nature—a powerful ally in contests with the Amazons—upon his side. 'Still I am afraid she has made a mistake, and even that she already knows it.'

'Indeed!' In her heart Mary thought that last statement of Charley's very possible. The whole matter was now plain to her: having failed with Edgar, Mrs. Beckett had accepted his uncle in pique and haste.

'If such is the case, Mary, Mrs. Beckett is surely to be pitied. Your own advice to me was to remember her former kindnesses, and not to give way to the indignation I felt against her. I followed it because it was your advice.'

'I am glad to hear it, Charley; then you are still good friends, I hope?'

'Yes. And why should not you and she be still good friends? She was not herself when she said to you whatever she did say.'

'If she was herself she certainly forgot it,' replied Mary icily.

Those infamous words, 'Do you think I do not know you, your pretence of modesty, your mock humility, your innocence forsooth, while all the time your heart—no, not your heart, your cunning, artful mind—was fixed on making him your husband?' once more rang in her ears. It is more difficult for a sensitive nature to forgive an insult than an injury.

'Oh, Mary, do not be hard against her,' pleaded the young man. 'I have not much knowledge of the world, as you just reminded me, but I know when a person is miserable, and very, very sorry for what they have done amiss. Mrs. Beckett said—and it was a great deal for her to say to one like me—"It is quite true that I have behaved harshly and unjustly to Mary Marron."

‘That must have been in reply to a reproach,’ said Mary severely. ‘What right had you to reproach her?’

This was a difficult question. Charley had undoubtedly had a right to reproach Mrs. Beckett, since the widow had always encouraged his addresses to her young friend; but to Mary herself he could not advance that plea.

‘I did not exactly reproach her,’ he answered deprecatingly. ‘You told me, you know, to keep my temper; so I only said that she ought to be ashamed of herself, and that to have presumed upon her beastly money—no, I didn’t say *that*,’ he put in precipitately, ‘I said to have thus presumed upon her wealth to insult a young girl in your position was what in a man would be termed the very basest description of cowardice. I was very careful after what you told me,’ added Charley humbly, ‘not to say anything offensive.’

Mary bit her lip, perplexed between a smile and a frown; she could hardly scold the young man for his championship, though it annoyed her exceedingly.

‘Poor Mrs. Beckett was so sorry,’ pleaded Charley. ‘If it had not been for No. Three that is to be I am sure she would have made some effort to get you back again. But with Ralph Dornay as master of the house she felt you would never so much as look at it through the area railings. But she was so sorry. If she could make any kind of reparation, she said—oh, pray don’t look so like Medusa, Mary; she didn’t put it like that; it’s my awkwardness. Perhaps I was mistaken in what she meant.’

‘I hope so, indeed, Charley. I can hardly think that Mrs. Beckett offered me money, as though I had been a crossing-sweeper her carriage wheels had run over in the street. I hope not that indeed.’

‘Oh dear, no,’ protested Charley, wiping his forehead with his handkerchief; ‘nothing was further from her thoughts, I’m sure. She wished to be of use to you, that’s all—only when I heard of your working at the what-d’ye-call-it for sixpence a sheet—’

‘A folio, Charley. Again I must remind you that the type-writer is not a sewing machine.’

‘Why, dear me, it’s downright beggary!’ exclaimed the young fellow, wringing his hands in deprecation.

‘No, Charley, it would be beggary if I took Mrs. Beckett’s money. At my new trade I shall earn quite enough for my modest needs.’

‘But these can’t last for ever,’ he urged, pointing to the

lawyer's papers. 'And when you get to be an expert—it's a mere question of political economy; I read all about it for my "exam."—the supply will exceed the demand.'

'Then I shall go to the law stationers and into the public market armed with my little card, "Documents copied with punctuality and despatch." I have thought of all that, I do assure you.'

'Well, if you really must, Mary—I mean, if you have made up your mind to occupy yourself in this way just at present, at least do not work for those starvation prices. Why not copy for authors instead of lawyers? I know a man who is always writing—poems and all sorts of things—and who gives five shillings a sheet—I mean a folio. He is always complaining, since he himself writes so badly, that he can't get his work properly copied out. It won't be much, you know, but it's better than this sort of work.'

'Charley! Charley! fie! for shame!' said Mary reproachfully.

'What do you mean?' he inquired simply, while an innocent blush overspread his youthful features.

'Only that I don't believe in poets who want their verses copied by the folio for five shillings, or any other price. Your political economy should have taught you better than to advocate "bounties," Charley. No, I am not angry with you'—for he had hung his head—'far from it, Charley. The deceit of some people is better than the plain speaking of others. But there must be nothing of this sort from *anybody*. And now, Charley, I must go back to my work.'

The young fellow's simple device for adding to her scanty gains had touched her, and she was not strong enough just now to endure even a mistaken kindness.

'I may come again?' he inquired hoarsely. 'My mother, perhaps, may send some message.'

'Yes, yes, only not just at present. Good-bye, Charley.'

'Good-bye, Mary.'

He pressed her hand with a quick, passionate grasp, which she did not return; but she felt the parting and the loneliness that was to follow; nay, when he had gone she even wept a little, for, as with poor Lucy in the ballad, though she had no thought of him as a lover, he

had been kind till her,

And that was the thought brought the tear to her eye.

CHAPTER XXII.

A DEVOTEE OF LITERATURE.

WHEN we are lonely, or separated from our usual social circle, we are apt to respond to the friendly overtures of strangers more readily than under ordinary circumstances. We are not so fastidious in our choice of a companion, and feel grateful for civilities which, when on our native heath and within call of our clan, we should decline with thanks, or even without them.

Throughout the day after Charley's departure poor Mary was very depressed and sad. It would have been a great comfort to her if she could have looked forward to other such visits, but for his own sake she had discouraged them. She had, as it were, with her own hand severed the only link between herself and her old world; and her new world, though she courageously strove to make the best of it, was by no means to her taste.

Of all the persons living under the same roof with her perhaps Miss Julia Blithers seemed the least calculated to attract her sympathies; her opinions, as has been hinted, were but the echo of other people's, and they were always added, like an echo, when others had had their say. Her form was portly and majestic, which gave them some apparent weight, but morally she was but the shadow of her sister, of whom she stood in a fear that may have been wholesome, but was a little abject. The views of Miss Blithers the elder were dogmatic and severe; they were therefore Miss Julia's views; but the less mature lady had no more knowledge of the tenets with which she thus sympathised by proxy than Wamba the son of Witless had of ecclesiastical Latin. Her shibboleth, like his, would naturally have been *pax vobiscum*, but fate had ordered it otherwise. Mr. Tidman in a moment of hilarity, which he was made to regret, had dubbed the sisters parson and clerk; and what they most affected was the Communion Service. Those unregenerate and hopelessly ignorant heretics, Mrs. Tiffin and Miss Fandango, cowered before Miss Blithers' scourge (she was of the strictest sect of Bath Pharisees) and to every crack of it her younger sister murmured earnestly, 'Amen.' Under such circumstances it was not likely that Mary Marvon would be much attracted towards Miss Julia Blithers; and when that lady suddenly developed an inscrutable attachment to her, her first impulse was to shrink from it, as one shrinks

from the devotion of some very *retroussé*-nosed pug-dog who insists upon following us home.

In her peculiar position, however, the importunity of friendliness from any one was hard to be resisted, and almost without being aware of it she found herself getting on a familiar footing with Miss Julia. It was something in her favour that her overtures were never made in public; she seized every opportunity—when they met upon the stairs or in the passage—to make the tenderest inquiries. Had Mary slept well, or had she found her pillow like a wafer? (in the Tidmans' establishment the pillows reminded one of the cognizance of the Prince of Wales, though of course he knew nothing about it: they had each three feathers in them). Did she ever have a long candle? Bedroom candles were used at Tidman's, as in King Alfred's time, as a measure of time; they were designed, more or less accurately, for the period of each guest's disrobement. If anybody was accidentally longer than usual, through something having got in a knot or other cause, she generally found herself in the dark.

'If you had a long candle,' said Miss Julia, after several swallow-flights of talk, on an occasion when she found herself alone with Mary in the common sitting-room, 'I suppose you would work at night, Miss Marvon?'

Mary flushed up indignantly. Poor people, and especially people who have not been used to be poor, always think that their poverty is being alluded to.

'I never work at night,' she said. 'If I wanted to do so, perhaps I could buy some inexpensive sort of candles—what is called in architecture "composite"—for myself.'

'Oh dear, I didn't mean that,' quavered Miss Julia.

Apart from her indomitable and autocratic sister she was very pusillanimous; she looked as frightened as Torquemada's secretary might have done had he fallen into the hands of a select circle of Jews.

'I only meant to say,' she explained, 'that when thoughts—great thoughts—come to me at night, it's so very sad not to be able to write them down. Sarah wouldn't hear of it, even supposing that I *had* a candle.'

'I am not much troubled with great thoughts,' said Mary, smiling in spite of herself. The picture of Miss Julia on her thin pillow, burthened with an inspiration which she feared would escape her memory before morning, tickled her fancy.

'But you do write, don't you?' inquired Miss Julia eagerly.

'Yes, I write,' said Mary. No one at Tidman's knew of her type-writer; she kept the instrument locked, and though every one in the house had secretly had a look at its case Mary had not chosen to gratify their curiosity about it. What business was it of other people's that she made her living, or proposed to do so, by copying manuscripts? She was not ashamed of it, but she knew enough of the world to feel that the publication of the fact would not improve her position at Tidman's. The use of the article therefore remained a mystery. Some thought it a sewing machine, others an harmonium; Miss Julia alone felt confident that it was a desk of peculiar construction at which for five hours every day Mary composed works of the imagination.

'Is it prose or poetry?' whispered Miss Julia tremulously.

'Prose.'

An expression of disappointment flitted over the other's majestic features.

'But you *can* write poetry?'

'Just as well as prose,' said Mary. This was audacious, though not altogether incorrect, for of course she was referring to the capabilities of the copying machine and not to her own.

'Dear me! what a gift you must have! You must know, dear Miss Marvon, that you have a sister poetess in me; but I'm only a beginner. I've read, and read, and read poetry all my life. I doat upon it even when I don't quite understand it; but I've had such difficulties to contend with: Sarah thinks it wicked, so I've had to read it on the sly.'

'But is not that wicked, Miss Julia?'

'Yes, but I don't at all mind that. Lord Byron was wicked, dreadfully wicked. Shelley was rather wicked. I should think if one knew what he meant (though I never can quite make it out) that Shakespeare was wicked. It's a part of the poetic temperament.'

'It's very easy to be a poet so far,' said Mary smiling.

The simplicity of her companion was so amazing, and her ignorance so stupendous, that their combination with any such aspirations as she hinted at seemed incredible; yet Miss Julia's desire to distinguish herself in letters—that is, in print—was perfectly genuine, and the line she had selected for herself was poetry.

'I hope,' continued Mary, as the other shook her head as though she had tried wickedness and found even that not so easy, 'that it wasn't your conviction of my being wicked that led you to imagine that I wrote verses?'

‘Not at all, my dear Miss Marvon. When Sarah has said that she was certain you had not been sent away from Park Lane for nothing, I could never bring myself to say, as she expected me to do, “Of course not;” and when Mrs. Tiffin spoke of that young man coming to see you the other day——’

‘I don’t wish to hear what Mrs. Tiffin or any one else said about me,’ interrupted Mary scornfully.

‘I can easily believe it. What does the poet care for the opinion of the world? As for Mrs. Tiffin, as Sarah says, she is a dancing girl without her attractions, a broken-down Eastern voluptuary on half-pay. My sister’s words are always well chosen, though she doesn’t always know what she is talking about. Oh, no, it was not your wickedness, my dear Miss Marvon, that made me recognise in you a sister bard. It was your conversation.’

‘Literature—much more poetry—is not a common topic in this house, Miss Julia; I don’t remember——’

‘Of course not,’ broke in the other; ‘it is so natural to you to speak of these things—to drop pearls, as somebody says, out of the jewel-case of your memory—that you don’t know when you’re at it. I don’t talk much, as you may have noticed, but I observe; I store up, I study the great book of human nature, because some day I mean to write about it myself. Yes, some day, when Sarah’s dead and I have got the money to bring it out, I mean to publish my poems.’

‘Gracious Goodness!’ ejaculated Mary.

‘Of course it surprises you to hear that I contemplate anything of the sort,’ said Miss Julia humbly; ‘I know everybody thinks me a worm—a mere earthworm.’

‘Indeed, it was not *that*,’ said Mary apologetically, ‘but you seemed to look forward so—or at all events to regard so philosophically the prospect of the decease of your sister.’

‘I hate her,’ was the surprising rejoinder. ‘There, it’s out. I *hate* her. The poet (as you are aware) is dowered with the hate of hates, the scorn of scorns, but no poet ever hated his sister as I do.’

It was impossible, hearing the tone in which she spoke, to disbelieve her. The worm, as she called herself, had shown its characteristic capacity for turning in a most unmistakable manner. Miss Julia Blithers had for once indulged herself in an impulse, and in the presence of a kindred spirit (as she fancied her present companion to be) had laid bare her soul. ‘My dear Miss Marvon, you see before you a crushed flower.’ Stem and blossom sh-

stood five feet ten, and would have weighed the scale down against an aloe tree, tub and all. 'But for that woman my name would have been inscribed in the rolls of fame; but for her it would have been written there that *circa*—that's the word, though I don't exactly know what it means—that *circa* 1870 Julia Blithers "*flourished*." As it is I am far from flourishing, but I can recognise genius in another.'

'But indeed, Miss Julia, I am no genius,' remonstrated Mary, laughing; 'you are altogether mistaken about me.'

'You might just as well say I am mistaken about myself. I have genius too, but not to so great an extent. If you were not a very great genius how could you stand up against Sarah? She has given up patronising you; have you noticed that?'

'I have,' said Mary, 'and with considerable satisfaction.'

'Just so; but it's not because she likes you. She hates you—that's nothing; she hates everybody but herself—but she is also exceedingly afraid of you. Do you remember how you set her down about Jupiter and Io?'

'I remember that I set her right,' said Mary.

'That *is* setting her *down*,' returned Miss Julia. 'In the Gallery catalogue the letters were both printed the same size, so she took them for a one and a nought and called it Jupiter and Ten. She had called it so to me before, but I had not the courage to correct her. I envy you many things, Miss Marvon, but above all I envy you your courage and independence. Oh!'—here she threw up her hands with passionate energy—'if one only knew while there was yet time, before the mischief was done and one was made a slave for life, how foolish it is to endeavour to conciliate the cruel! What is the use of it? Do you think it pleases them? *Nothing* pleases them; it only makes them feel how much you are afraid of them and encourages them to trample on you.'

Tragedies are common enough among the commonplace; but here was a tragedy in surely the very last place where one would have looked for it. Unless Miss Julia Blithers was an actress of the Siddons order (which seemed improbable) she was speaking out of the fulness of a bruised heart and from the experience of a life of misery. 'I know what you are thinking; I know what you are feeling,' she went on. 'You are saying to yourself, "Even supposing what this woman says is true, how can it excuse her conduct to others? Why is she so bitter? why is she so brutal?" I will tell you why. She is a coward because she wishes (though

she knows it to be useless) to curry favour with her master. If you had been crushed as I have been, from your very cradle, you would have come to be a coward too.'

It was terrible to hear her. Self-humiliation could hardly further go. Her tall form and huge proportions seemed to make her abasement more pitiable. So have I seen in school life, where the system permitted of it, some dullard of man's growth cowed and tormented by some pigmy prig, whose turn for Latin verses has given him ill-placed authority. But even a turn for Latin verses is something, whereas Miss Blithers the elder had no gift in that way, nor in any other.

'It is very, very sad,' sighed Mary compassionately. Her natural impulse was to encourage her companion to revolt; but, unlike some sons of freedom with whom I am acquainted, principle was not everything with her. She had a tender consideration for the slave herself. 'I conclude,' she said, 'that you are dependent upon your sister?'

Miss Julia bowed her head. 'I have not one farthing in the world,' she moaned, 'save what she chooses to give me. My father arranged it so because Sarah had always had the management of me. He would not listen to me; he said I was as ignorant of the world as a child; but even a child knows when she has been wronged. Oh! cruel! cruel!'

'But your mother?'

'Sarah killed her. Yes, I say Sarah killed her. She was a delicate, sweet creature, with gentle ways and without a will of her own. She was superseded by my sister as the mistress of her own house; my father and she ignored her very existence, and between them they broke her heart. *You* have a tender heart, Miss Marvon, too; but then you have a will of your own. Great heavens! what would I give for a will of my own—though, indeed, what would be the use of it, since I should have no power to use it?'

Before Miss Julia had begun her confidences—that is to say, a quarter of an hour ago—it would have seemed impossible to Mary that she should have taken any interest in her. But throughout these revelations, spontaneous as a geyser that finds for the first time an outlet, and almost as vehement, Mary had been drawn towards her more and more. That account of her dead mother, and how she came by her end, went home to Mary's very heart, where it touched a sympathetic chord. Of her own mother she dared scarcely think; but something whispered to her, when she

did so, that she too had been badly used ; and had not she herself a father whose memory had nought of reverence in it ? ’

‘ I am very sorry for you, Miss Julia, very sorry. ’

‘ I know that, ’ answered the other, rocking herself in her chair, to the great peril of its dismemberment, ‘ I know that—the first person that ever has been sorry for me. You would help me if you could, I feel, but nobody *can* help me. It was selfish of me to tell you all this when I knew that, when I know it could only make you miserable for nothing. But I did not mean to tell you when I began ; let us talk no more of it. What were we saying before ? Yes, it was about literature. Oh ! what a blessing it is to read and to forget our own lives in the thoughts of others ! ’

This was perhaps the most sensible observation that Miss Julia Blithers had ever uttered, and so far as she was concerned it was original. If dull people would but confine themselves to matters within their own experience and understanding they would be much better company. What is genuine is scarcely ever wearisome. The misfortune is that people conscious of intellectual incapacity are prone to borrow the thoughts of others without due appreciation of their meaning. It is fair to say of Miss Julia, that though she thus borrowed freely it was never without acknowledgment ; but, from a combination of various causes, the chief of which was misquotation, it happened that she often libelled the illustrious dead, and—to the unlearned who chanced to listen to her—made their illustriousness a subject of very natural surprise and amazement.

‘ Of course no one but yourself, my dear Miss Marvon, ’ she went on with sudden cheerfulness, ‘ has any idea of my literary attainments. I could often set people right upon this and that, which would be a very great satisfaction to me, if I only had the courage ; but then Sarah would be sure to say, “ And, pray, how came *you* to know ? ” ’

Mary nodded adhesion ; she thought such an observation was very likely to be made.

‘ Now the other day, ’ Miss Julia continued complainingly, ‘ I might have distinguished myself at the dinner table. You remember how poor Miss Fandango got laughed at for alluding to Jane as a ‘ youth, ’ upon the ground that youth was always masculine and never feminine, except, as Sarah said, with her usual bitterness, except perhaps in the West Indies. ’

‘ I remember that delicate stroke of satire, ’ observed Mary, smiling.

‘Just so. Well, poor Miss Fandango was quite right. It is poets who make the language, and one great English poet has certainly made ‘youth’ feminine. Coleridge in his ‘Youth and Age’ has done it. I haven’t the book, but I distinctly remember the words. Some old woman is bewailing the days gone by when she was a youth.’

‘Are you sure it was a woman, not a man?’ inquired Mary.

‘Quite sure. It can’t be otherwise, because she says—

Life is but thought; so think I will
That youth and I are housemaids still.

So you see that she and the other youth must have been both housemaids.’

‘My dear Miss Julia,’ said Mary, keeping her countenance with a great effort, ‘I think you are mistaken. The words are almost identical, so that your error is merely one of ear, but what Coleridge wrote is not ‘housemaids’ but ‘housemates.’

‘But there is no such word in the dictionary.’

‘Perhaps not; but then, as you have said, it is the poet who makes the language.’

‘Dear me, I suppose you’re right. What a memory you must have for the least things! I’m very much obliged to you for the correction; not that it much signifies: I have cried over those lines again and again when I thought it was housemaids. Of course Coleridge knew best, but I must say that housemates is not half so natural.—Dear me, here’s Sarah,’ added Miss Julia hastily. ‘If she asks any questions, pray remember we were talking about domestic servants.’

(To be continued.)

Bits of Oak Bark.

1. THE ACORN-GATHERER.

BLACK ROOKS, yellow oak leaves, and a boy asleep at the foot of the tree. His head was lying on a bulging root close to the stem: his feet reached to a small sack or bag half full of acorns. In his slumber his forehead frowned—they were fixed lines, like the grooves in the oak bark. There was nothing else in his features attractive or repellent: they were such as might have belonged to a dozen hedge children. The set angry frown was the only distinguishing mark—like the dents on a penny made by a hobnail boot, by which it can be known from twenty otherwise precisely similar. His clothes were little better than sacking, but clean, tidy, and repaired. Any one would have said, ‘Poor but carefully tended.’ A kind heart might have put a threepenny-bit in his clenched little fist, and sighed. But that iron set frown on the young brow would not have unbent even for the silver. Caw! Caw!

The happiest creatures in the world are the rooks at the acorns. It is not only the eating of them but the finding: the fluttering up there and hopping from branch to branch, the sidling out to the extreme end of the bough, and the inward chuckling when a friend lets his acorn drop tip-tap from bough to bough. Amid such plenty they cannot quarrel or fight, having no cause of battle, but they can boast of success, and do so to the loudest of their voices. He who has selected a choice one flies with it as if it were a nugget in his beak, out to some open spot of ground, followed by a general Caw!

This was going on above while the boy slept below. A thrush looked out from the hedge, and among the short grass there was still the hum of bees, constant sun-worshippers as they are. The sunshine gleamed on the rooks’ black feathers overhead, and on the sward sparkled, from hawkweed, some lotus and yellow weed, as from a faint ripple of water. The oak was near a corner formed by two hedges, and in the angle was a narrow thorny gap. Presently an old woman, very upright, came through this gap carry-

ing a faggot on her shoulder and a stout ash stick in her hand. She was very clean, well dressed for a labouring woman, hard of feature, but superior in some scarcely defined way to most of her class. The upright carriage had something to do with it, the firm mouth, the light blue eyes that looked every one straight in the face. Possibly these, however, had less effect than her conscious righteousness. Her religion lifted her above the rest, and I do assure you that it was perfectly genuine. That hard face and cotton gown would have gone to the stake.

When she had got through the gap she put the faggot down in it, walked a short distance out into the field, and came back towards the boy, keeping him between her and the corner. Caw! said the rooks, Caw! Caw! Thwack, thwack, bang, went the ash stick on the sleeping boy, heavily enough to have broken his bones. Like a piece of machinery suddenly let loose, without a second of dubious awakening and without a cry, he darted straight for the gap in the corner. There the faggot stopped him, and before he could tear it away the old woman had him again, thwack, thwack, and one last stinging slash across his legs as he doubled past her. Quick as the wind as he rushed he picked up the bag of acorns and pitched it into the mound, where the acorns rolled down into a pond and were lost—a good round shilling's worth. Then across the field, without his cap, over the rising ground, and out of sight. The old woman made no attempt to hold him, knowing from previous experience that it was useless, and would probably result in her own overthrow. The faggot, brought a quarter of a mile for the purpose, enabled her, you see, to get two good chances at him. A wickeder boy never lived: nothing could be done with the reprobate. He was her grandson—at least the son of her daughter, for he was not legitimate. The man drank, the girl died as was believed of sheer starvation: the granny kept the child, and he was now between ten and eleven years old. She had done and did her duty, as she understood it. A prayer-meeting was held in her cottage twice a week, she prayed herself aloud among them, she was a leading member of the sect. Neither example, precept, nor the rod could change that boy's heart. In time perhaps she got to beat him from habit rather than from any particular anger of the moment, just as she fetched water and filled her kettle, as one of the ordinary events of the day. Why did not the father interfere? Because if so he would have had to keep his son: so many shillings a week the less for ale.

In the garden attached to the cottage there was a small shed with a padlock, used to store produce, or wood in. One morning, after a severe beating, she drove the boy in there and locked him in the whole day without food. It was no use, he was as hardened as ever.

A footpath which crossed the field went by the cottage, and every Sunday those who were walking to church could see the boy in the window with granny's Bible open before him. There he had to sit, the door locked, under terror of stick, and study the page. What was the use of compelling him to do that? He could not read. 'No,' said the old woman, 'he won't read, but I makes him look at his book.'

The thwacking went on for some time, when one day the boy was sent on an errand two or three miles, and for a wonder started willingly enough. At night he did not return, nor the next day, nor the next, and it was as clear as possible that he had run away. No one thought of tracking his footsteps, or following up the path he had to take, which passed a railway, brooks, and a canal. He had run away, and he might stop away: it was beautiful summer weather and it would do him no harm to stop out for a week. A dealer who had business in a field by the canal thought indeed that he saw something in the water, but he did not want any trouble nor indeed did he know that some one was missing. Most likely a dead dog; so he turned his back and went to look again at the cow he thought of buying. A barge came by, and the steerswoman, with a pipe in her mouth, saw something roll over and come up under the rudder: the length of the barge having passed over it. She knew what it was, but she wanted to reach the wharf and go ashore and have a quart of ale. No use picking it up, only make a mess on deck, there was no reward—'Gee-up! Neddy.' The barge went on, turning up the mud in the shallow water, sending ripples washing up to the grassy meadow shores, while the moorhens hid in the flags till it was gone. In time a labourer walking on the towing-path saw it, and fished it out, and with it a slender ash sapling, with twine and hook, a worm still on it. This was why the dead boy had gone so willingly, thinking to fish in the 'river,' as he called the canal. When his feet slipped and he fell in, his fishing line somehow became twisted about his arms and legs, else most likely he would have scrambled out, as it was not very deep. This was the end; nor was he even remembered. Does any one sorrow for the rook, shot, and hung up as a scarecrow? The boy had

been talked to, and held up as a scarecrow all his life: he was dead, and that is all. As for granny, she felt no twinge: she had done her duty.

2. THE LEGEND OF A GATEWAY.

A great beech tree with a white mark some way up the trunk stood in the mound by a gate which opened into a lane. Strangers coming down the lane in the dusk often hesitated before they approached this beech. The white mark looked like a ghostly figure emerging from the dark hedge and the shadow of the tree. The trunk itself was of the same hue at that hour as the bushes, so that the whiteness seemed to stand out unsupported. So perfect was the illusion that even those who knew the spot well, walking or riding past and not thinking about it, started as it suddenly came into sight. Ploughboys used to throw flints at it, as if the sound of the stone striking the tree assured them that it was really material. Some lichen was apparently the cause of this whiteness: the great beech indeed was known to be decaying and was dotted with knot-holes high above. The gate was rather low, so that any one could lean with arms over the top bar.

At one time a lady used to be very frequently seen just inside the gate, generally without a hat, for the homestead was close by. Sometimes a horse, saddled and bridled, but without his rider, was observed to be fastened to the gate, and country people being singularly curious and inquisitive, if they chanced to go by always peered through every opening in the hedge till they had discerned where the pair were walking among the cowslips. More often a spaniel betrayed them, especially in the evening, for while the courting was proceeding he amused himself digging with his paws at the rabbit-holes in the mound. The folk returning to their cottages at even smiled and looked meaningly at each other if they heard a peculiarly long and shrill whistle, which was known to every one as Luke's signal. Some said that it was heard regularly every evening: no matter how far Luke had to ride in the day, his whistle was sure to be heard towards dusk. Luke was a timber-dealer, or merchant, a calling that generally leads to substantial profit as wealth is understood in country places. He bought up likely timber all over the neighbourhood; he had wharves on the canal, and yards by the little railway station miles away. He often went up to 'Lunnon,' but if it was ninety miles, he was sure to be back in time to whistle.

If he was not too busy the whistle used to go twice a day, for when he started off in the morning, no matter where he had to go to, that lane was the road to it. The lane led everywhere.

Up in the great beech about eleven o'clock on spring mornings there was always a wood-pigeon. The wood-pigeon is a contemplative sort of bird, and pauses now and then during the day to consider over his labours in filling his crop. He came again about half-past four, but it was at eleven that his visit to the beech was usually noticed. From the window in the lady's own room the beech and the gate could be seen, and as that was often Luke's time she frequently sat upstairs with the window open listening for the sound of hoofs, or the well-known whistle. She saw the wood-pigeon on so many occasions that at last she grew to watch for the bird, and when he went up into the tree, put down her work or her book and walked out that way. Secure in the top of the great beech, and conscious that it was spring, when guns are laid aside, the wood-pigeon took no heed of her. There is nothing so pleasant to stroll among as cowslips. This mead was full of them, so much so that a little way in front the surface seemed yellow. They had all short stalks; this is always the case where these flowers grow very thickly, and the bells were a pale and somewhat lemon colour. The great cowslips with deep yellow and marked spots grow by themselves in bunches in corners or on the banks of brooks. Here a man might have mown acres of cowslips, pale but sweet. Out of their cups the bees hummed as she walked amongst them, a closed book in her hand, dreaming. She generally returned with Luke's spaniel beside her, for whether his master came or not the knowing dog rarely missed his visit, aware that there was always something good for him.

One morning she went dreaming on like this through the cowslips, past the old beech and the gate, and along by the nut-tree hedge. It was very sunny and warm, and the birds sang with all their might, for there had been a shower at dawn, which always sets their hearts a-tune. At least eight or nine of them were singing at once, thrush and blackbird, cuckoo (afar off), dove, and greenfinch, nightingale, robin and loud wren, and larks in the sky. But, unlike all other music, though each had a different voice and the notes crossed and interfered with each other, yet they did not jangle but produced the sweetest sounds. The more of them that sang together the sweeter the music. It is true they all had one thought of love at heart, and that perhaps brought about the

concord. She did not expect to see Luke that morning, knowing that he had to get some felled trees removed from a field, the farmer wishing them taken away before the mowing-grass grew too high, and as the spot was ten or twelve miles distant he had to start early. Not being so much on the alert, she fell deeper perhaps into reverie, which lasted till she reached the other side of the field, when the spaniel rushed out of the hedge and leaped up to be noticed, quite startling her. At the same moment she thought she heard the noise of hoofs in the lane—it might be Luke—and immediately afterwards there came his long, shrill, and peculiar whistle from the gate under the beech. She ran as fast as she could, the spaniel barking beside her, and was at the gate in two or three minutes, but Luke was not there. Nor was he anywhere in the lane, she could see up and down it over the low gate. He must have gone on up to the homestead, not seeing her. At the house, however, she found they had not seen him. He had not called. A little hurt that he should have galloped on so hastily, she set about some household affairs, resolved to think no more of him that morning, and to give him a frown when he came in the evening. But he did not come in the evening; it was evident he was detained.

Luke's trees were lying in the long grass beside a copse, and the object was to get them out of the field, across the adjacent railway, and to set them down in a lane on the sward, whence he could send for them at leisure. The farmer was very anxious to get them out of the grass, and Luke did his best to oblige him. When Luke arrived at the spot, having for once ridden straight there, he found that almost all the work was done, and only one tree remained. This they were getting up on the carriage, and Luke dismounted and assisted. While it was on the carriage he said, as it was the last, they could take it along to the wharf. The farmer had come down to watch how the work got on, and with him was his little boy, a child of five or six. When the boy saw the great tree fixed, he cried to be mounted on it for a ride, but as it was so rough they persuaded him to ride on one of the horses instead. As they all approached the gate at the level crossing, a white gate with the words in long black letters, 'To be kept Locked,' they heard the roar of the morning express and stayed for it to go by. So soon as the train had passed, the gate was opened and the horses began to drag the carriage across. As they strained at the heavy weight the boy found the motion uncomfortable and cried out, and Luke, always kind-hearted, went

and held him on. Whether it was the shouting at the team, the cracking of the whip, the rumbling of the wheels, or what was never known, but all of a sudden the farmer, who had crossed the tail, screamed, 'The goods!' Round the curve by the copse, and till then hidden by it, swept a goods' train, scarce thirty yards away. Luke might have saved himself, but the boy. He snatched the child from the horse, hurled him—literally hurled him—into the father's arms, and in the instant was a shapeless mass. The scene is too dreadful for further description. This miserable accident happened, as the driver of the goods' train afterwards stated, at exactly eight minutes past eleven o'clock.

It was precisely at that time that Luke's lady, dreaming among the cowslips, heard the noise of hoofs, and his long, shrill and peculiar whistle at the gate beneath the beech. She was certain of the time, for these reasons: first, she had seen the wood-pigeon go up into the beech just before she started out; secondly, she remembered nodding to an aged labourer who came up to the house every morning at that hour for his ale; thirdly, it would take a person walking slowly eight or ten minutes to cross that side of the mead; and, fourthly, when she came back to the house to see if Luke was there, the clock pointed to a quarter-past, and was known to be a little fast. Without a doubt she had heard the well-known whistle, apparently coming from the gate beneath the beech exactly at the moment poor Luke was dashed to pieces twelve miles away.

3. A ROMAN BROOK.

The brook has forgotten me, but I have not forgotten the brook. Many faces have been mirrored since in the flowing water, many feet have waded in the sandy shallow. I wonder if any one else can see it in a picture before the eyes as I can, bright, and vivid as the trees suddenly shown at night by a great flash of lightning. All the leaves and branches and the birds at roost are visible during the flash. It is barely a second; it seems much longer. Memory, like the lightning, reveals the pictures in the mind. Every curve, and shore, and shallow is as familiar now as when I followed the winding stream so often. When the mowing-grass was at its height, you could not walk far beside the bank; it grew so thick and strong and full of umbelliferous plants as to weary the knees. The life as it were of the meadows seemed to crowd down towards the brook in summer, to reach out

and stretch towards the life-giving water. There the buttercups were taller and closer together, nails of gold driven so thickly that the true surface was not visible. Countless rootlets drew up the richness of the earth like miners in the darkness, throwing their petals of yellow ore broadcast above them. With their fulness of leaves the hawthorn bushes grow larger—the trees extend farther—and thus overhung with leaf and branch, and closely set about by grass and plant, the brook disappeared only a little way off, and could not have been known from a mound and hedge. It was lost in the plain of meads—the flowers alone saw its sparkle.

Hidden in those bushes and tall grasses, high in the trees and low on the ground there were the nests of happy birds. In the hawthorns blackbirds and thrushes built, often overhanging the stream, and the fledglings fluttered out into the flowery grass. Down among the stalks of the umbelliferous plants, where the grasses were knotted together, the nettle-creeper concealed her treasure, having selected a hollow by the bank so that the scythe should pass over. Up in the pollard ashes and willows here and there wood-pigeons built. Doves cooed in the little wooded enclosures where the brook curved almost round upon itself. If there was a hollow in the oak a pair of starlings chose it, for there was no advantageous nook that was not seized on. Low beside the willow stoles the sedge-reedlings built; on the ledges of the ditches, full of flags, moorhens made their nests. After the swallows had coursed long miles over the meads to and fro, they rested on the tops of the ashes and twittered sweetly. Like the flowers and grass, the birds were drawn towards the brook. They built by it, they came to it to drink; in the evening a grasshopper-lark trilled in a hawthorn bush. By night crossing the footbridge a star sometimes shone in the water underfoot. At morn and even the peasant girls came down to dip; their path was worn through the mowing-grass, and there was a flat stone let into the bank as a step to stand on. Though they were poorly habited, without one line of form or tint of colour that could please the eye, there is something in dipping water that is Greek—Homeric—something that carries the mind home to primitive times. Always the little children came with them: they too loved the brook like the grass and birds. They wanted to see the fishes dart away and hide in the green flags: they flung daisies and buttercups into the stream to float and catch awhile at the flags, and float again and pass away, like the friends

of our boyhood, out of sight. Where there was pasture roan cattle came to drink, and horses, restless horses, stood for hours by the edge under the shade of ash trees. With what joy the spaniel plunged in, straight from the bank out among the flags—you could mark his course by seeing their tips bend as he brushed them swimming. All life loved the brook.

Far down away from roads and hamlets there was a small orchard on the very bank of the stream, and just before the grass grew too high to walk through I looked in the enclosure to speak to its owner. He was busy with his spade at a strip of garden, and grumbled that the hares would not let it alone, with all that stretch of grass to feed on. Nor would the rooks, and the moorhens ran over it, and the water-rats burrowed; the wood-pigeons would have the peas, and there was no rest from them all. While he talked and talked, far from the object in hand, as aged people will, I thought how the apple tree in blossom before us cared little enough who saw its glory. The branches were in bloom everywhere, at the top as well as at the side; at the top where no one could see them but the swallows. They did not grow for human admiration: that was not their purpose; that is our affair only—we bring the thought to the tree. On a short branch low down the trunk there hung the weather-beaten and broken handle of an earthenware vessel; the old man said it was a jug, one of the old folks' jugs, he often dug them up. Some were cracked, some nearly perfect; lots of them had been thrown out to mend the lane. There were some chips among the heap of weeds yonder. These fragments were the remains of Anglo-Roman pottery. Coins had been found—half a gallon of them—the children had had most. He took one from his pocket, dug up that morning; they were no value, they would not ring. The labourers tried to get some ale for them, but could not; no one would take the little brass things. That was all he knew of the Cæsars: the apples were in fine bloom now, weren't they?

Fifteen centuries before there had been a Roman station at the spot where the lane crossed the brook. There the centurions rested their troops after their weary march across the downs, for the lane, now bramble-grown, and full of ruts, was then a Roman road. There were villas, and baths, and fortifications; these things you may read about in books. They are lost now in the hedges, under the flowering grass, in the ash copses, all forgotten in the lane, and along the footpath where the June roses will bloom after the apple blossom has dropped. But just where the

ancient military way crosses the brook there grow the finest, the largest, the bluest, and most lovely forget-me-nots that ever lover gathered for his lady.

The old man, seeing my interest in the fragments of pottery, wished to show me something of a different kind lately discovered. He led me to a spot where the brook was deep, and had somewhat undermined the edge. A horse trying to drink there had pushed a quantity of earth into the stream, and exposed a human skeleton lying within a few inches of the water. Then I looked up the stream and remembered the buttercups and tall grasses, the flowers that crowded down to the edge ; I remembered the nests, and the dove cooing ; the girls that came down to dip, the children who cast their flowers to float away. The wind blew the loose apple bloom and it fell in showers of painted snow. Sweetly the greenfinches were calling in the trees : afar the voice of the cuckoo came over the oaks. By the side of the living water, the water that all things rejoiced in, near to its gentle sound, and the sparkle of sunshine on it, had lain this sorrowful thing.

RICHARD JEFFERIES.

Echo and the Ferry.

A Y, Oliver! I was but seven, and he was eleven;
 He looked at me pouting and rosy. I blushed where I stood.
 They had told us to play in the orchard (and I only seven!
 A small guest at the farm); but he said, 'Oh, a girl was no good!'
 So he whistled and went, he went over the stile to the wood.
 It was sad, it was sorrowful! Only a girl—only seven!
 At home in the dark London smoke I had not found it out.
 The pear-trees looked on in their white, and blue birds flash'd
 about,
 And they too were angry as Oliver. Were they eleven?
 I thought so. Yes, everyone else was eleven—eleven!

So Oliver went, but the cowslips were tall at my feet,
 And all the white orchard with fast-falling blossom was litter'd;
 And under and over the branches those little birds twitter'd,
 While hanging head downwards they scolded because I was seven.
 A pity. A very great pity. One should be eleven.

But soon I was happy, the smell of the world was so sweet,
 And I saw a round hole in an apple-tree rosy and old.
 Then I knew! for I peeped, and I felt it was right they should
 scold!

Eggs small and eggs many. For gladness I broke into laughter;
 And then some one else—oh, how softly!—came after, came after
 With laughter—with laughter came after.

And no one was near us to utter that sweet mocking call,
 That soon very tired sank low with a mystical fall.
 But this was the country—perhaps it was close under heaven;
 Oh, nothing so likely; the voice might have come from it even.
 I knew about heaven. But this was the country, of this
 Light, blossom, and piping, and flashing of wings not at all.
 Not at all. No. But one little bird was an easy forgiver:
 She peeped, she drew near as I moved from her domicile small,
 Then flashed down her hole like a dart—like a dart from the quiver.
 And I waded atween the long grasses and felt it was bliss.

—So this was the country ; clear dazzle of azure and shiver
 And whisper of leaves, and a humming all over the tall
 White branches, a humming of bees. And I came to the wall—
 A little low wall—and looked over, and there was the river,
 The lane that led on to the village, and then the sweet river
 Clear shining and slow, she had far far to go from her snow ;
 But each rush gleamed a sword in the sunlight to guard her long
 flow,

And she murmur'd, methought, with a speech very soft—very low.
 'The ways will be long, but the days will be long,' quoth the river,
 'To me a long liver, long, long !' quoth the river—the river.

I dreamed of the country that night, of the orchard, the sky,
 The voice that had mocked coming after and over and under.
 But at last—in a day or two namely—Eleven and I
 Were very fast friends, and to him I confided the wonder.
 He said that was Echo. 'Was Echo a wise kind of bee
 That had learned how to laugh : could it laugh in one's ear and
 then fly

And laugh again yonder ?' 'No ; Echo'—he whispered it low—
 'Was a woman, they said, but a woman whom no one could see
 And no one could find ; and he did not believe it, not he,
 But he could not get near for the river that held us asunder.
 Yet I that had money—a shilling, a whole silver shilling—
 We might cross if I thought I would spend it.' 'Oh yes, I was
 willing'—

And we ran hand in hand, we ran down to the ferry, the ferry,
 And we heard how she mocked at the folk with a voice clear and
 merry

When they called for the ferry ; but oh ! she was very—was very
 Swift-footed. She spoke and was gone ; and when Oliver cried,
 'Hie over ! hie over ! you man of the ferry—the ferry !'
 By the still water's side she was heard far and wide—she replied
 And she mocked in her voice sweet and merry, 'You man of the
 ferry,

You man of—you man of the ferry !'

'Hie over !' he shouted. The ferryman came at his calling,
 Across the clear reed-border'd river he ferried us fast ;—
 Such a chase ! Hand in hand, foot to foot, we ran on ; it sur-
 pass'd

All measure her doubling—so close, then so far away falling,

Then gone, and no more. Oh ! to see her but once unaware,
And the mouth that had mocked, but we might not (yet sure she
was there !),

Nor behold her wild eyes, and her mystical countenance fair.

We sought in the wood, and we found the wood-wren in her
stead ;

In the field, and we found but the cuckoo that talked overhead ;
By the brook, and we found the reed-sparrow deep-nested, in
brown—

Not Echo, fair Echo ! for Echo, sweet Echo ! was flown.

So we came to the place where the dead people wait till God call.
The church was among them, grey moss over roof, over wall.
Very silent, so low. And we stood on a green grassy mound
And looked in at a window, for Echo, perhaps, in her round
Might have come in to hide there. But no ; every oak-carven seat
Was empty. We saw the great Bible—old, old, very old,
And the parson's great Prayer-book beside it ; we heard the slow
beat

Of the pendulum swing in the tower ; we saw the clear gold
Of a sunbeam float down to the aisle and then waver and play
On the low chancel step and the railing, and Oliver said,

' Look, Katie ! look, Katie ! when Lettice came here to be wed
She stood where that sunbeam drops down, and all white was her
gown ;

And she stepped upon flowers they strew'd for her.' Then quoth
small Seven :

' Shall I wear a white gown and have flowers to walk upon ever ?'

All doubtful : ' It takes a long time to grow up,' quoth Eleven ;

' You're so little, you know, and the church is so old, it can never
Last on till you're tall.' And in whispers,—because it was old
And holy, and fraught with strange meaning, half felt, but not
told,

Full of old parsons' prayers, who were dead, of old days, of old
folk,

Neither heard nor beheld, but about us in whispers we spoke.

Then we went from it softly and ran hand in hand to the strand,

While bleating of flocks and birds' piping made sweeter the land.

And Echo came back e'en as Oliver drew to the ferry

' O Katie !' ' O Katie !' ' Come on, then !' ' Come on, then !'

' For, see,

The round sun, all red, lying low by the tree'—' by the tree.'

'By the tree.' Ay, she mocked him again, with her voice sweet and merry :

'Hie over!' 'Hie over!' 'You man of the ferry'—'the ferry.'
'You man of the ferry—
You man of—you man of—the ferry.'

Ay, here—it was here that we woke her, the Echo of old ;
All life of that day seems an echo, and many times told.
Shall I cross by the ferry to-morrow, and come in my white
To that little low church ? and will Oliver meet me anon ?
Will it all seem an echo from childhood pass'd over—pass'd on ?
Will the grave parson bless us ? Hark, hark ! in the dim failing
light
I hear her ! As then the child's voice clear and high, sweet and
merry
Now she mocks the man's tone with 'Hie over! Hie over the ferry!
'And, Katie.' 'And Katie.' 'Art out with the glowworms to-night,
My Katie ?' 'My Katie !' For gladness I break into laughter
And tears. Then it all comes again as from far-away years ;
Again, some one else—oh, how softly !—with laughter comes after,
Comes after—with laughter comes after.

JEAN INGELOW.

*Health in a Health Resort.*¹

BY BENJAMIN WARD RICHARDSON, M.D., F.R.S.

IT was my lot to work with many other workers, and to work hard for over twenty years, at sanitary science, without arresting the public attention so as to make it take a living interest in sanitary labours. Commonest facts were received as dry, hard, impenetrable; particulars in relation to construction of houses for health's sake were considered as disagreeable and indeed not quite fitted for ears polite; statements of reduced death-rates that might and would come under a better *régime* were laughed at as the dreams of visionary enthusiasts; prognostications relating to the inevitable removal of some of the most fatal and sweeping diseases by sanitary measures were treated as attempted interferences with the dispensations of Providence. In a sentence, we were embarrassed by two obstructions: we were embarrassed by the enormous accumulation of our own riches, and we were embarrassed by the objections which the people offered to what we had accumulated. It seemed as if we were building up a wall between ourselves and others. If we could only by some fortunate process gain favourable and friendly access to the public ear! This, to me, and I doubt not to many other of my co-workers in those days, was the constant thought. At last it came into my mind that, should an opportunity of a very fortunate kind offer, I would try a new method. I would for once go out of the way of collecting more evidence, which indeed was little wanted, and try to win attention by a literary effort that should take the form of allegory. In time the opportunity came. I was invited to preside over the Health Department of the Social Science Congress at Brighton, and thereupon I determined to try the experiment of setting forth a picture of a model city. I went down to the quiet sea-side place known as Littlehampton, and there, wandering by the sea from day to day, I built an imaginary city, with as much of attention to details as if a real place were being founded. When I had

¹ Inaugural address, delivered before the Cheltenham Health Society, on Saturday, Jan. 27, 1883; the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol in the chair.

laid out all the plans I commenced to write the history of the city, as though it existed and I had visited it.

After the essay was complete I suffered no trifling anxiety on the question of bringing it before the world. It might be a literary and artistic failure—for no one in literature can judge of his own work—and then it would injure me, and, what was of far more importance, it might injure the object for which it was intended. Happily my good genius was kind and fortunate. The City of Health, called 'Hygeia,' was submitted, and the popularity it attained surpassed everything that could possibly have been expected by a temper far more sanguine than my own. If, indeed, I had founded an actual city, I doubt if it would have been so attractive; for men and women would then have been obliged to leave their homes to go and see that, while this went to them at their own firesides.

The account of my city was read in the most varied of places. The late Queen of the Netherlands, Queen Sophia, after the essay had been translated into Dutch, had it read aloud and discussed by the ladies of her Court. M. Jules Verne did me the compliment of making it the basis of one of his fascinating stories. In the cottages of the poor as well as in the homes of the wealthy the city found its way. It reached the school-rooms, and was often made the subject of casual examination there. Men sitting by log fires in their huts in the yet uncultivated parts of the world took from it ideas of the places they would build when they had made their wealth, and wrote to me to ask particulars on many points which they felt required to be enlarged upon. But the greatest honour I received from it was the fact of receiving a copy of it, printed and bound in a cheap form in combination with Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.' To be bound up in the same volume with the great tinker of Elstow and traveller to the Eternal City, out of whose pages my mother taught me to read our native tongue, was the crowning success of the delightful labour.

Several years have passed since the time of writing the 'City of Health,' and now, preparatory to coming here to this beautiful town of Cheltenham, and to preparing an address on 'Health in a Health Resort,' I have refreshed my memory by reading the essay again, in order to see if for an occasion like the present it could be revised or recast. I do not find it could be subjected to such change without spoiling it as an independent production, and therefore I leave it to answer still for itself, and to play its own part.

At the same time I have not re-studied the allegory without gathering from it some thoughts which are directly practical, and which will bear thoroughly on the objects connected with a meeting like the present, when a new Health Society for educational purposes is being inaugurated. I will, therefore, with your kind permission, bring forward a few points of a purely practical kind, which pertain to special sanitation in towns specially dignified as cities for health—‘Health in Health Resorts.’

In making the notes that are to follow, it is necessary to premise that I do not refer to any one particular town. I shall not stay to inquire whether what I would suggest exists in this town or any other. I shall speak strictly of a health resort anywhere, touching on its essentials here or in any place.

For the very term *Health Resort* carries with it the idea of health in all its fulness and all its happiness. Such a resort should include the whole that can be accomplished by human skill for the maintenance of natural life. In a Health Resort there should be no serious and certainly no contagious disease except what is imported into it, a penalty it exists to bear. In such a place the people should be types of health, and, as a result, types of beauty. There should be no insane wranglings there, and therefore no lawyers to live on mental troubles, except on such as are imported. There should be no sickness there, and therefore no doctors to cure sickness, except such as may be imported. And although I do not say there should be no sin there, and therefore no clergy, I do say that very few, even of clergy, should be required, seeing, as we must all see, that the work of the three learned professions is largely complementary, and that where the members of one abound, all abound in nearly equal ratio, and all are nearly equally called for.

Thus a Health Resort is, or should be, the ‘exemplum,’ as the apothecaries have it, for every other inhabited place.

Health Resorts are not all of this character. I do not know one that is, and we have yet long to strive before we bring any one of them near to it. We must proceed step by step and clear up as we proceed.

LOCAL SANITARY GOVERNMENT.

I do not think I can open better than by offering a few sentences on that primary of all sanitary subjects, and much vexed withal,—local sanitary administration and government.

The local government of the place is the health of the place. If this England of ours is ever to become an England of Health Resorts, it must be ruled into health by those who know, and know best, the wants, the necessities, the feelings, the failings of each individual centre. To try to make all the separate centres and towns of our land perfect in salubrity by directions and instructions from a central government control is to give up permanent local reform in this direction altogether. There are in a locality sufficient obstacles in overcoming mere local traditions and sympathies to render hopelessly impossible urgent reform pressed from a distant quarter where there is no local knowledge of sympathies and no sympathy with them.

A central board of reference; a board competent to speak with authoritative advice in general questions; a board that could arbitrate between conflicting opinions and would be open to be consulted on disputed points; a board which, by its *personnel*, would command the respect of the nation and confer scientific dignity on the nation in the presence of other nations; a board to which other nations organising a national health advancement could refer to; such a central board in England, at the seat of government, would be invaluable. Here, however, its duties should end. It should rule, not govern; be at once the greatest and the least of the sanitary authorities. It should be a centre, exhibiting to the nation and to the world the widest, to the particular locality the narrowest, range of action.

For the local work there must be the local power; power which the local authority shall be proud to exercise with knowledge and wisdom; power which shall be in its way competitive, and which shall have the effect of stimulating competition until health, like leaven, has leavened the whole of the national life.

The board which in each place should govern is, then, the first consideration; and as this board should be in the place itself, so much the more important is a society like that which I have the honour to inaugurate in this old town of Cheltenham. The society, if I am rightly informed, is to be the school of sanitation in which those who, in future, will have the health of the town in their hands will be trained in the practical work, trained in the sciences of health, and trained in company with the gentler sex, who, if they do not rule in the council, rule in the homes from which the council originates, and are even before the council itself in silent governance.

With the present improving state of education I am not inclined to suggest that any particular class of men should be selected for office on local sanitary boards. In past times there has been, I have no doubt, some drawbacks to sanitation from the circumstance that men uneducated to the task have been elected to legislate. I have seen this fact all my life as a sanitarian, and as much as any one of my class have had to meet and to deal with it as a difficulty. I am, however, sure, from this very experience, that many of the objections which are so often offered are in reality greatly exaggerated. The laws of health are so simple, so commonplace, the simplest person can easily learn and understand them. I have had as sanitary colleagues men who, at first the most unpromising, have become after a time the best and most practical. That which I have found the worst nature to treat with on these boards has been the intense selfish nature, and that, unfortunately, exists in all classes, often in the successful class of men more than in the poor and respectable. Moreover, I have observed that men of ordinary minds, brought to the practice of sanitation, and to the responsibilities connected with the practice, become learners of useful knowledge, and, by habit, in their turn teachers and exemplars. It therefore seems to me a good and wholesome custom to elect to sanitary offices from all classes of the community which are eligible for election the persons whose duty it is to carry out the details of the offices.

I am bold to intimate that it would be exceedingly wise also to let women become eligible for seats on local sanitary boards; for women are by nature sanitarians; they see the lights of health and the shadows of disease much more acutely and keenly than men do. They are quick at suggesting sound and wholesome reforms; they know infinitely more about the domestic life and the home than men know; when they are well informed and interested they are allies of the first order; while, when they are not informed and are not interested in reforms they are opponents which no man and no board can withstand. I take it indeed as impossible to make the slightest further permanent advance in sanitation unless the women of the country move with us men in the effort. Again, I take it as certain that if the women were to move with us heartily and intelligently in sanitation, we men would very soon have very little to do. For things are what they spring from. The great rivers are rivulets, the oceans are rivers; and if from those

millions of living rivulets which we call homes, over which the woman rules by right as well as by custom, we could see health and nothing but health issue forth, the rivers of health were made, the oceans were made, and the great earth were laved by the seas of healthy life.

But if we would get the minds of our women imbued with the importance of the work for health we have in hand, we must let them see the bearings of that work in its outer as well as its inner character. We must let them learn by practice the truth that the necessity for rule and governance outside the home originates from imperfect rule and governance inside the home. We must, in a word, let them share with men in the knowledge of public responsibilities.

Some general system requires to be introduced for regulating the numbers that shall constitute a local sanitary council in each locality. At present the system, if that may be called a system which has nothing systematic in it, is altogether irregular. To take an example. In the vast parish of St. Marylebone the sanitary work of the vestry is confided to a committee not larger than the committees of many of our small towns or large villages. In some places there are too many, in other places there are too few local health legislators. In the largest places there ought to be one local representative of health to five thousand of the population as a minimum of representation.

Again, in respect to the selection of sanitary boards, more care than now exists should be taken to select members to serve in answer to local demands within the district itself. I mean by this that each person elected should have under his particular knowledge and interest his or her particular district, the requirements of which should be at all times before the mind. The district would in this manner be under the most perfect observation; and the Medical Officer of Health, who should be conversant with the whole of the district, would at all times have the most valuable help at his command.

THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

The mention of the Medical Officer of Health leads me to say a word on the duties and position of that functionary. When the office was first established it seemed as if a new era had been opened in this country, during which the medical sciences would thrive with a brighter lustre and the world have the benefit of new light from them. The prophecy of Descartes that, in the

future, all the great advances in the physical and social sciences would be made through the medical, seemed to promise immediate fulfilment, for now a perfect army of professional experts was about to be sent forth to take the offensive against disease, so that disease, surely, would be met at its commencement, stayed as it was going forth. The results, I regret, have not yet been realised; but the failure lies apart from the great profession that has been most concerned with it. The failure has arisen from several circumstances. Firstly, the public has encouraged the medical officers, thus far, to do as little as possible, while it has often opposed them when they have done anything that appeared aggressive. Secondly, the public has shown no sufficient respect for the office, and, therefore, no sufficient respect for the officer. It has neither tested the office, nor prized it, nor exalted it. It has accepted it as if it were something it was obliged to accept, but would rather not. In response, the medical officer has felt distant in the performance of his tasks, which have been to him labours without pleasures, duties without thanks, deeds without credit. He has been placed in the position of a servant for a work in which, by education and special qualification, he is a master. I say no word about remuneration of the services of the medical sanitary staff of the country; that would be to introduce a selfish element which is unworthy of the argument. I speak of the mental elements that are connected with the question, and I argue that if the office is ever to be made of its full effect it must have accorded to it its full value, and, shall I not add, full dignity. Many of the duties of a medical officer of health are as important and vital as those of the judge on the bench; all are quite as important as those of the judge of the county court. Yet, if judges had to carry out their functions in the same manner as the representatives of health from the ranks of medicine they would be nowhere; they would have neither voice, nor influence, nor encouragement.

I suggest, therefore, in respect to the improvement of health in a health resort, that the Medical Officer of Health should have the true place that belongs to him in all that relates to official action bearing upon health. He should hold to the sanitary department just the same position as the recorder does to the legal. He ought not merely to be the adviser of his board; he ought, by virtue of his office, to be the chief and chairman of the sanitary department. He ought never to be elected for an indefinite period; he ought to be upheld in every useful health reform he

brings forward ; he ought to be encouraged to inaugurate reforms ; he ought to be placed in such an independent position that he can inaugurate any reform and correct any evil without being subject to the risk or personal anxiety of dismissal for good service ; he ought, in a word, to be able to put down disease, of which he is the medical judge, as freely, as unsparingly, as fearlessly, as the legal judge or magistrate puts down crime. Until this is the rule, medical officers of health will remain as mere clerks and chroniclers of disease ; suggesters of placebos in sanitation ; scapegoats of sanitary blunderers ; gentlemen of education engaged by money for perfunctory service.

THE BASIS OF TOWN SANITATION.

Once in speaking of a healthy dwelling I used a short expression, to the effect that a healthy house must have two good foundations, namely, stonework and good drainage.

The remark applies as fully to a town or city as it does to a single dwelling. Every single house ought to be cut off from its sewer. Every town ought to be cut with equal decision from its sewage. I touch therefore in the next place on the drainage of a health resort.

I can see no perfection in any system of drainage or sewerage in any town that does not carry out the separate system—that is to say, the system of removing the sewage, and all water that is used for domestic purposes, by a distinct series of drains, and pipes, and sewers ; and all storm water by another and distinct system. Between sewage and storm water there should be no possible connection. At whatever preliminary cost, the sewage should be exhausted from the town with a known quantity of water admitted for domestic purposes, and none other. If natural advantages lie ready for this exhaustion, so much the better. Let them be used, by all means. If, however, there be no such natural advantages, no pretence should be allowed, by wise men, for preventing an artificial exhaust method by which the sewage can be lifted clean away, and so lifted that as it is removed all foul air from every house can be carried away also, and every closet and every drain be flushed with air as well as water in one unchanging out-of-the-town direction. With well-arranged small sewer-pipes and with steam power for exhaust power, when that is called for, there is no place that I have ever seen that cannot be cleansed of its dead and dangerous matter minute by minute every minute of the year ; and with complete

arrangements thus carried out, there is really no need for special sewer-ventilation for any house or building. Each house is cleansed at all times, and every opening from it, connected with the main system, is a point where flushing commences; every house, in a word, is a house that is always being purified of all impurity it engenders that can pass away by a sewer.

When a result like this is obtained, a town is as near to safety as it can possibly be from a whole class of diseases which carry with them a definite mortality; and, other things being equal, there has been effected in it nearly half the reform that is required for making sure of the natural death-rate of a model community.

Of the mode of disposing of the product conveyed away by exhaust removal, there ought, in time, to be no difficulty. The natural destination of the product is well known. It is a part of the soil, and to the soil it should return. I dare not pretend, however, to state at this moment that science has given to every place this mode of utilisation in so true and easy a manner that it is only to proceed and succeed. Certainly when sewage is removed with a limited quantity of water, and when all storm water is carried away by a distinct outlet, more than half the difficulty is met; but what is still required is a rapid and easy mode, and cheap mode, of condensing the product, while it is in the state preceding its decomposition.

I am not at all satisfied that model sewage farms, close to living communities, in which many crops are grown in the course of a year, are the best contrivances that can be conceived. I once inspected one of these farms attached even to a Health Resort, and the results were not by any means so pure and purifying as was desirable; for there were winds which sometimes blew over that town from the farm, and then the air of the place was indeed not so refreshing as a sanitarian would envy, neither was the produce of the farm of a character that the agriculturist would altogether envy.

Here, then, we still wait for science. She has to show us a way by which this rich fertilising substance, refused of the town, may be distributed over large surfaces of land, and by wide spreading be lost for all evil, and saved for all good purposes.

Knowing the difficulties of success in this matter, I am sometimes forced to give advice which in one respect does not accord with that which would be given by some of my learned *confrères* who agree, otherwise, as to the principle of immediate self-cleansing of every aggregate community. I say with them, remove, remove,

remove ; I say with them, utilise, utilise, utilise, whenever you can ; but I dare not permit the idea of utilisation to stand for a moment in the way of removal. Hence I have more than once advocated, as a temporary measure, in seaside places, the removal of the sewage into the sea rather than the dangerous disposal of it on the earth. In the sea it is not lost, though it may be diverted some distance from instant human requirements, and the man who is endeavouring to utilise sewage on the soil under the notion that useful matter must otherwise be necessarily sacrificed is labouring under a delusion. In the laboratory of nature nothing can ever be lost, because nature, almighty conservator from age to age, keeps up such a continuous supply for demand, that from the very womb of death spring, in perpetual line, the most perfect forms of life.

There are of course many towns which are so situated that a sewage farm on a large scale is quite feasible ; and when that is the case there is nothing to be said but one thing, namely, use the sewage on that farm ; but, do not let the farm, in its turn, become an open cesspool.

In towns where there is no sea for receiving the sewage, and no farms on which the sewage can be safely and conveniently utilised, the question what is best to do is still an open question of serious import. I am often questioned in respect to this difficulty, and I confess I cannot answer, in many instances, with the decision I should like to offer. The cesspool is not a thing to be represented as possible in any case if it can be in any way avoided. Separate collection of the material and removal is always an expensive and troublesome process except in the rarest instances. There remains, therefore, in the difficulty no other course but the earth system, and that system during the year immediately past has met with an advancement from the discovery by Dr. Versmann of the application of peat dust for absorption and deodorisation. It seems to me that in this plan there is an opening for the concentration of sewage material in a way more effective and economical than has yet been found. The peat dust possesses the power, it is said, of absorbing eight times its own weight of material without being offensive and without decomposition, and if this should turn out to be true, a great step has been made.

You will observe that I have named three modes of ultimate destination for the organic *débris* of the healthy town—viz., the farm ; the sea ; and the mould system, or peat direct absorption system. You may perhaps ask, what about the river or canal

system for removal, when river or canal lies temptingly open for the conveyance?

On this point I have a suggestion to make, which is, I believe, new, and which would meet the immediate requirements, not only of our own country in many parts of it, but of our nearest neighbour, France. In France there is a rule which forbids the pollution of rivers and running streams of all kinds by sewage matter. The precaution is a wise one, but it is attended with the most provoking difficulties, because in many places, I may almost say in most places, it enforces a system of cesspools, which are dangerous to the last degree. Hence there are many in France who would like to adopt our system, and use the river or canal for conveyance; a system which we, for many obvious and healthful reasons, are trying to abolish.

The plan I am now about to propose would solve, I think, largely, the difficulty. I suggest that for a town placed near a river or canal the said river or canal should still be the means of transit, but that it should not be polluted as a stream. To obviate the pollution, I would have receiving floating tanks on the canal or river, in or connected with a steam barge, which should pump from the town its sewage into the receiving tanks, and then, when charged, steam away with the fertilising material to depôts in the course of the river, where the material could be applied, directly or after preparation, to the purposes of agriculture.

A little organisation would soon make this practice, I am convinced, all but universal. Even in seaside towns the plan could be carried out; and along many barren coasts, where now no land is cultivated, the meadow and cornfield could rise up, and add not only food for the grosser appetites of the people, but finer scenery to the landscape.

In many instances in the inland districts of this country the empty coal barge, going back from the great centres of life to be refilled with common fire-food, could, by a simple change in construction, be made applicable for carrying or towing the tank containing the fertilising food-making material for the human fire.

I sum up these suggestions in two recommendations. The first recommendation is definite:—

1. Separate the storm water from the water used for domestic purposes and from the sewage of the town. Do this at all costs, so that absolute self-cleansing is the persistent method in force.

The second recommendation is less definite, because it carries

with it different ideas of practice for different places, but it is not less necessary.

2. Remove the material refuse of the town to such a distance or such a position that it cannot, indirectly, be a source of danger to the town, if it be determined to utilise it by one or other of the modes that have been up to this time devised, or by any other method that may be practicable. But if it cannot be directly utilised for immediate human application, let Nature have it for her general purposes ; the sea as the final resource.

UTILISATION OF STORM WATER.

I have spoken of storm water, and have urged that such water, which it is impossible rightly to dispose of in a sewer with sewage, should be conveyed away by a distinct course or channel. The place for which it is destined is the river or running stream that is nearest at hand. But in a model town the whole of the storm water ought not to have that instant destination. It ought to be caught as it flows from roofs of houses and other buildings, and, in a more systematic manner than has ever yet been done, it ought to be purified, filtered, and stored for domestic use. I remember in my young days that in our villages the soft-water butt to each house was considered an indispensable necessity. The mode of collection and storage was elementary and not satisfactory, but it answered to a considerable extent. It gave the family soft water for the hands, and the laundry was supplied from it for washing purposes, to the saving of much labour and much soap. In an improved manner this old-fashioned system should be applied by common consent and common arrangement to the whole of the town. The difficulties are nothing when the difficulty of willing that it shall be done is overcome. There is now invented a very effective soft-water collector and filter, and the obtaining of good iron cisterns for storage is not much trouble and not much expense. The water filtered and stored under the direction of the local authority could be supplied at different parts of a town by sale at a small cost per gallon : it might be laid on to houses that required it at a comparatively trifling expense and supplied by meter.

COMMON WATER SUPPLY.

In the Health Resort the common water supply should, as a matter of necessity, be as pure and as abundant as it is possible

to make it by all the appliances of modern science. I need not urge that it should come from a source entirely disconnected from sewage contamination,—from an independent source. I need not urge that it should be supplied in such abundance that each person should have sufficient for every necessity per day for his or her personal wants. The merest tyro in sanitation in our day understands these necessities. I must, however, insist on one or two matters connected with the common water supply which require, though they be very plain, to be insisted and re-insisted upon. I will take these requirements in order. First, then, it is essential that the supply to every house should be constant. There should be no partial dependence on wells, and on reservoir supply. Wells for individual residences, used or not used according to individual taste or caprice, should certainly all be closed, except in cases where the distance of a residence from a central supply is too great to enable the central supply to be utilised. Then, again, the supply should be constant from the main or reservoir to the house, and always laid on. I mean by this that there should be no cistern storage of water in any house. In my experience there is, in fact, nothing more dangerous, except fire, than water stored in a house for common consumption. The cistern is usually inaccessible; it is kept clean with the utmost difficulty; it is constantly subject to impurities introduced by accident into it; it keeps the atmosphere of the house around it unnaturally cold in winter; it keeps the water within it unnaturally heated in summer; it is a frequent receptacle of impurities. In a word, it is wrong from the beginning to the end of the chapter.

Respecting the preparation of the water for consumption before it goes into the chief reservoir, I say nothing to-day. A quarter of a century ago I should have dwelt with the utmost emphasis on points, then little understood generally, in relation to the dangers connected with waters containing organic matter, the difficulties of freeing water, on a large scale, from organic impurities, and the further difficulty of determining, with ready precision, the amount of organic substance that may be present in a water intended for human consumption. In the present day all these points are cleared up. We declare the purity of a water from the absence of organic impurity; we know how, in the most accurate manner, to detect such impurity; and we are satisfied that it is only a matter of money and conscience to gain a steady supply that is quite free from organic poison.

I pass by these subjects, therefore, as of the past, to notice

two others which are of the present, which are still *sub judice* as practical subjects in sanitation, and which resolve themselves into the following questions.

Ought a water of a model town to be brought to a given fixed degree of softness? Ought a water of a model town to be kept at an equable temperature?

The answer to the first question ought, I think, to be affirmative. A water to be quite free from injury to health should not have more than 8° to 9° of hardness, and when it exceeds that it should, by the lime-softening process, be brought down to the proper standard. In Canterbury the authorities have carried out this process on an extensive scale, and nothing could be more satisfactory than the result. I have visited the works for softening of water in Canterbury for the purpose of gaining a good practical lesson, and I came away so much surprised and instructed, I would recommend every sanitarian who has not been to make amends to himself by going as soon as he can.

I have no doubt myself that a hard water, taken as drink, is a cause of constipation, dyspepsia, and some other derangements of the body which I will not call actual diseases. I feel, also, that the evidence is very nearly conclusive that hard water, as a drink, does, as it is often supposed to do, produce glandular swellings in the neck—*goître*—in susceptible persons. We all know that a hard water makes bad tea, and is a bad medium for ablution. Of late years we have lost the dread which was once held in respect to the deleterious action of soft water on leaden pipes because we are beginning to use iron instead of leaden conduits; so that on all grounds the soft-water supply becomes urgent for every town that claims to be called a health resort.

The idea of keeping a town supplied at all seasons with water having a uniform temperature is of quite modern development. We are indebted for it to Mr. Baldwin Latham, and, in my opinion, the debt is considerable. Mr. Latham urges that in summer time the water stored in houses, or even in outside reservoirs, becomes heated, and by that means is a ready cause of decomposition of organic matter, and a cause indirectly of the intestinal disturbance which is often present in hot sultry weather. To prevent this accident Mr. Latham has invented an ingenious plan by which he brings the water into every house by a tube which has been driven many feet into the earth—to a point, in short, where there is a persistent low temperature. At all seasons, therefore, the water drawn into the house furnished with this

tube is what is called cold, and, what is of more importance, it is of equal temperature; it drinks like fresh spring water. Latham's would probably be too expensive a process to introduce into every house, although the simple and rapid manner in which the tube is driven into the ground is a model of ingenuity. But in all public places in a Health Resort it should certainly be introduced. It should be in every hostel, at every drinking fountain, in every public lavatory.

FOOD CENTRES.

The centres for the supplies of food in a Health Resort demand a supervision equal only to that which has reference to the supply of pure water. For all the young milk is required, and should be, of the best and the healthiest. But milk is a source of constant danger. In some of our present Health Resorts cows are cooped up in the most limited space, in what are called cow-sheds, for the sole purpose of making them turn vegetable food into milk. For months together these miserable animals never see the open day, never know what it is to stretch out at full freedom on green sward, never know what it is to breathe the pure open air, never know what it is to be fed on any variety of food save that which makes them yield the largest quantities of milk. They are, in truth, like animal machines kept in sheds, the sheds in the heart of the human population itself, the poorest probably of its kind. On milk manufactured under these conditions—in partial darkness, dirt, close air, and often without any provision for the separation of healthy from unhealthy animals—on such milk how can infants and children live, to live wholesomely? It is impossible, and, I am bound to say, wickedly impossible. To this, also, is added the further danger of epidemic diseases spreading through milk—a risk so great, that in one town alone which I recently inspected I was able to estimate that at least a saving of one death per thousand per annum would have resulted from an entire and perfect reformation of the milk supply.

The care required for the milk food extends equally to the solid animal food called butcher's meat. The claims of morality and of humanity as well as of health demand in every Health Resort that the private slaughterhouses should be replaced by the public *abattoir*, with its efficient and cleanly lairs, its proper killing places and rooms for dressing the carcass, its lavatories for the workmen, and its cold storage rooms for the reception and wholesome preservation of carcasses and joints. To this *abat-*

toir there should be an officer appointed, who, after the Jewish fashion, should inspect every particle of flesh that goes forth for human consumption, and let none go that is in any degree tainted with disease.

The vegetable markets in a town of health require, in like manner, systematic supervision; so that fruit and vegetables laid out for sale shall be cleansed from living and dead impurities, which are causes of affections of a parasitic nature.

The staff of life, the bread of our Health Resort, that gives good health on every hand, deserves, finally, a careful treatment in production. The oldest art in the world is, perchance, the art of making bread; and yet it is of all arts the one least advanced as a pure and cleanly process, healthful alike to those who make and those who take. The more we examine the condition of bakeries in town and country, the more as sanitarians we wonder that human beings can be found, at any price, to undergo the penalty of being enslaved often half the night underground, exposed to the most varying temperatures and foul air, and engaged in a labour that is as laborious as it is unwholesome. The more also we wonder that sensible people should be content to eat of bread made under such conditions, and worked as dough by the naked limbs of the unhealthy workers. For all sakes the bakeries in every town call for incessant supervision, for perfect sanitary construction, and for the introduction of the pure and simple process of manufacture by machinery, Daughlish's unfermented method.

DRINKING FOUNTAINS AND PUBLIC LAVATORIES.

No more appropriate place than this offers for the introduction of one or two paragraphs on the subject of drinking fountains and public lavatories, to which reference has just been incidentally made.

Both these conveniences are essential in a Health Resort.

The drinking fountain, artistic as it can be in construction, should be the thing of beauty and usefulness in every square and other open space. It should give pure water without money and without price to all who ask for it. To man it should supply this vital element; to beasts of burthen and cattle it should supply this vital element; to all our lower earth-mates it should supply this vital element, and to none so anxiously as to our best of friends the dog, who, suffering from want of it, is apt unwittingly

to be affected with disease of madness, and to become in that state one of man's most dangerous enemies.

The public lavatory is a demand as great in the Health Resort as the drinking fountain, with which indeed in many instances it might be conveniently associated—the lavatory for men on one side of the fountain, and for women on the other. In such lavatories there ought to be every convenience for ablution, and a dressing-room. There might also be, as has been suggested by the promoters of the Châlet Company, a space allowed in which travellers could for a small fee leave, temporarily, a travelling-bag or parcel.

These lavatories in every place would, I am quite sure, soon become self-supporting, and indeed such necessities that we should in a short time wonder how we ever got on without them. But apart from the convenience attached to them there is introduced by them the all-important ideas of cleanliness and purity, those true and permanent symbols of a good and holy life. We are such creatures of habit, we are sure to follow what we see for good or evil if the good or the evil be ever before us. If a gin-palace, with its bad odours, its reeking wretchedness, its squalid, dirty *habitués*, its mad and maddening sounds, its raging controversies, its reeling, heartless, senseless crowd turning out at midnight to infect the very air and diffuse physical and moral disease wherever its members went,—if such a house, I say, were to be set up for the first time in a town of health, where all was healthy in body and in mind, the people would loathe it, shrink from it as from the bottomless pit, and with averted faces close it by universal consent, as a thing too terrible to be permitted even in sight. Yet we, creatures of habit, see this thing, some of us daily, and scarcely wonder at its existence. *Per contraria* as to the thing, and *per similia* as to the effect on the mind, is it then not essential that things suggestive of purity should hold their prominent place wherever Health, which will not be seen in sullied vestments, is asked to take her residence?

Though to the pure all things are pure, still they

Have this for duty,

To see that beauty

And all things that to goodness lead the way,

Take full possession of those things of evil

Which by their combination make the devil.

PUBLIC BATHS AND LAUNDRIES.

It is not necessary to insist on the erection of public baths in a Health Resort. The necessity is granted. I must, however, say a word about the public laundries that are all but universally called for. Perhaps in English towns we are as well off in respect to laundries as anywhere, and yet the old saying that 'bad's the best' was never more applicable. In the construction of the public laundry there is really little to learn, as any one will see who will take the pains to inspect a model laundry, like that for example in the Grand Hotel at Brighton. Yet there is one thing much wanted, and that is the introduction of this model institution everywhere. Double injury springs from the present system. In the small houses of the poor in which so large an amount of laundry work is going on, the atmosphere is overcharged with moisture, and the poor children of the workers are exposed to many acute diseases, especially to croup, from this cause. That is evil number one. Evil number two is more extended and extensive: I refer to the danger—always imminent from the laundry, in which there is no separation of infected from uninfected clothing, and no disinfecting chamber for infected clothing—that the poisons of the infections shall be conveyed by clothing into the homes of the healthy, an accident which is so easy to accomplish, the wonder is that it is not more frequently accomplished.

ATMOSPHERIC PURIFICATION.

We are now all well alive to the fact that a Health Resort must have, if it would retain its character, a pure atmosphere. The atmosphere must be free from poisonous emanation, free from dust and smoke. A proper system of sewage, such as we have already studied, seconded by rapid means for removing the ashes and dust from houses and the refuse of mews and stables, would be sufficient to keep the air clear of poisonous emanations under ordinary circumstances. But for clearance of smoke we must wait a little longer. Happily the day is dawning when that object is sure to be attained. So soon as the electric light wins its certain way, so soon will coal come to the fore and to the fire in the form of partly purified gas, cheap, ready to burn at a moment's notice, and yielding heat, without either smoke to obscure the air or sulphurous acid vapour to injure vegetation.

CARE OF THE INFECTIOUS SICK.

In the model Health Resort the care of the sick should receive especial care in one particular direction, that, namely, of making, in all cases of infectious disease, immediate provision for the separation of the affected from the healthy, to which must, of course, be added provision for the care and treatment of the affected. To the study of this question I have devoted close attention for many years. I have made myself practically acquainted with the existing plans for placing sufferers from infectious disease, and I have read every argument I could obtain bearing upon the subject with the earnest desire to arrive at a fair conclusion. The result of this research may be summed up in a few lines.

It seems to me that every Health Resort should have within itself a small hospital, and if the place be large a series of small hospitals, ready at every moment for the reception of the infected sick from all classes of society, rich as well as poor. Such hospitals should be under the control of the local central authority, and each should be constructed to receive not more than twenty to thirty sufferers at one time, so that spread of infection by concentration of the sick may not occur. In crowded places these hospitals should, in my opinion, be placed on the level of the roofs of the houses of the place; they should be constructed of iron, and, as I have elsewhere indicated, they should be purified by fire, so that all organic matter from the sick is instantly destroyed.

The hospitals thus planned, and made entirely safe from becoming sources of danger to the general community, should be in the midst of the community; firstly, because it is bad practice to remove the sick long distances; and secondly, because every person in whose house a case of infectious disease breaks out should be induced, by example, to have the sufferer not torn away by miles of distance, but removed close at hand to a proper place provided with every means for the most scientific treatment, and isolated from the rest of the community.

Institutions like these, laid out in number according to the population and wants of every town, the wants being estimated by the zymotic death rate, would soon reduce the zymotic diseases to the lowest possible figure, and the death rate to a minimum which I dare not venture to particularise lest hope should appear to have outridden discretion. But it is obvious to every one who thinks on the matter, that the results would be

stupendous, because it will be seen that, under the *régime* suggested, every private house would cease to be a centre of infectious disease; every person accidentally attacked would be removed out of harm's way; and every person so removed would be placed under the best circumstances to secure recovery. Amongst the poor children suffering from contagious disease, the mere matters of equable temperature and proper feeding would alone suffice to reduce the mortality full one half what it is amongst them from the infectious maladies. In connection with this department for the management of the infectious sick, the local authority should have a meteorological observatory in order to detect the relation of seasons and of all known atmospherical variations to disease. It should keep curve charts of these diseases, after the method introduced by Messrs. Mitchell and Buchan, of the Scottish Meteorological Society. It should also instruct its sanitary inspectors to sustain the strictest police observation as to the development of infectious disease in different centres of the community; and, whenever a centre was found to be steadily yielding a number of cases exceeding a certain standard it should be down on that centre, and, if absolutely necessary, should carry out to the letter the old Mosaic system of pulling the infected parts down and reconstructing them in a condition of health. Lastly, in respect to these contagious diseases, the local authority ought to have the most accurate registration of such diseases at all times, throughout all the boundaries under its jurisdiction.

CARE OF THE POOR IN RELATION TO HEALTH.

Beyond the social and political necessities for the care of the poor, the local authority should make certain particular provisions for the maintenance of their health. For the young it should ensure good playgrounds and parks for recreative life, so that recreation may, in its strictest sense, be not a word but a reality. For the poor more advanced in life there should be the same care, and in their case that care should extend from recreation even to work. For improvements in reference to work I could offer many details, but must be content to state two which, to my mind, are most urgent,—namely, public workrooms for working men and women, and better model common lodging-houses for wayfarers of the itinerant class. The workrooms suggested should be rooms in which no one is allowed to live and

sleep, but in which any poor person engaged in indoor work, such as tailoring or shoemaking, should be able, under proper supervision, to hire a workroom for a small sum per week, which he or she could use as the lawyer or merchant uses his office. In that manner the worker would be relieved of the closeness of the home life, while the public would no longer be subject to the danger of receiving from the infected room articles of clothing and other materials which are too often the certain bearers of disease. The common lodging-houses suggested for itinerant wayfarers should have all the healthy necessities for temperance, cleanliness, and chastity of the best lodgings. Luxuries are not called for, necessities are ; and for the poorest necessities, at least, should be at hand. I know that uncultivated moralists of some schools, anxious ever to make man out to be a greater sinner than he really is, are too apt to throw all the burthen of the sins of a community on the most unfortunate members of it, and to feel or even express that, for them, anything is good enough. The argument is as false as cruel, and, like all wrong, rebounds. For these unfortunates, left to their own unhappy fate, are the plague-spots of communities who repay neglect by transmission of misery.

THE MORTUARY AND BURIAL PLACE.

In a Health Resort there should be always present temporary resting-places for the dead. The dead amongst the living in our crowded communities yield some of the saddest pictures of modern life. If I were a painter and could bring myself, through my art, to touch the souls of men and women at the most sensitive of sensitive points, I could, if the brush did not fall from my hand, paint pictures from my experience of the dead amongst the living that would make the hardest weep. One such scene only, as I recall it, makes me pale to think on. There should be no such thing in our current civilisation. In decent order, each one of the dead in the crowded living should be removed to a mortuary fitted with all that ministers to the respect due to death. In the same place, that ancient and truly great officer, the Coroner, should have his court—where, with the solemnity befitting the vocation, he and his sworn men should perform their important duties.

And still in England, if we would have every town healthy as a Health Resort, it is necessary to continue to improve the places of sepulture. Our cemeteries for a half century about have been

sufficient. They are beginning to cease so to be. I have so recently explained my views on this point, I need not repeat them here; except to say, in a breath, that in the model town it is essential, as a matter of health, to prepare the soil for sepulchral purposes on Seymour Haden's plan, and to permit, to those who wish it, and will submit to special legislative supervision, the crematorium for their dead.

ART AND SANITATION.

I have now dwelt on the essentials for Health in a perfected town. I have suggested not one thing that does not lie within reach of those who would have it; while I have suggested what would make life possible, well nigh up to the ordination of perfect life as we, at this period of our planetary history, understand it.

It may be said, however, that in the teaching offered art is left in abeyance, and that all things that help to make life cheerful and the surroundings of life beautiful—all the emotions of the artistic soul—are sacrificed to the hardness of intellectual desire.

Not at all! It is true that sanitary science has been iconoclast after a certain style because it has had so much to destroy before it could progress: it is true that, not being itself art, it has failed to substitute artistic designs for that which it has effected. I admit so much, but no more. I claim that the true sanitarian knows best of all men the usefulness of everything that affords true and chastened and ennobling pleasures to the mind; and while, therefore, he on his side does his duty, he waits only for the artist to perform, in his way, a similar service. We sanitarians, in short, await a new development from art to adorn and crown our work. Then Sentiment and Reason, for a time disunited, shall come once more together; Refinement shall sustain Science, and Beauty with Health shall be the bewitching genii of all peoples and all time.

Japanese Art.

FOR all who have any feeling for seemliness, grace, and beauty, the passage from a country which has no living tradition of art to another where this tradition virtually retains its ancient force, presents a contrast as striking as it is refreshing. We cannot say of the people of England, as a whole, that they have any such living tradition. There is no definite method of treating the forms and ornaments of buildings common to all Englishmen. It is not merely that an order to a hundred different workmen for the same thing will produce a hundred objects unlike each other, for this, in itself, would be a merit rather than a fault; but it will either call forth works betraying utter poverty of invention and a helpless borrowing of forms and ornaments belonging to many different ages or countries, or a request from the workman to be supplied with a design. The land has lost its ancient architectural language, and barbarous jargons have taken the place of the ancient common speech. The result is that, although fine and even great works may be raised by professional architects who have the knowledge and the skill, and although the power of carving in stone, wood, or metal may have been to a large extent or altogether recovered, there is, on the whole, and in all common things, an oppressive reign of ugliness. Our towns, our villages, our barns, our gates, our railway stations, our cottages are for the most part unsightly things, and clearly show that the mass of the people neither wish nor care that it should be otherwise.

They who have this wish and care cannot fail to experience a strong feeling of relief and pleasure on passing the Swiss border, for instance, from the side of Basel, and finding themselves in a land where they see at once that the common village mason, the carpenter, and the blacksmith all work in thorough harmony, following the same method, having one system of ornamentation—in short, speaking the same language, and using a living art. It is pleasant to find that ugliness has given place to beauty, and that the commonest and simplest things, being fitted exactly to their purpose, are in perfect harmony with scenes of the greatest magnificence.

It becomes clear to such a traveller that there are no conditions, however difficult, with which this living art is unable to deal; that angles which might elsewhere appear awkward or hideous are here made the means of giving fresh pleasure from the skill which makes them look beautiful; and that all this work is done naturally and without any painful effort, although with all the care which every part of it asks for. After awhile the traveller may begin to feel that the living tradition survives chiefly amongst the village workmen, and that when we get to the big towns we see quite enough of the ugliness which meets our eye everywhere in England or in France, or even in the pure Teutonic land of the Rhine; but the fact will remain that in that part of the people which is least brought under foreign influences and which has been most sheltered from the blighting shadow of what is called the Renaissance and from the plagues which have followed in its train, the old tradition lives on with unabated force, and that the issue is unfailing seemliness, a perfect adaptation of means to ends, and a freedom which revels in its strength and in its grasp of all the problems with which it has to deal.

On a traveller journeying in this spirit a visit to Japan must leave precisely the same kind of impression, though it may, and probably will, be a much deeper one. For the reason of this difference we shall not need to seek far. Japanese art is wider in its range, more complex and more varied than that of Switzerland, and, until a time comparatively late, it has been far less exposed to mischievous and corrupting influences. Without serious qualification it may still be said that the living art of Japan reigns supreme throughout the whole land. It has undergone great changes, and the history of these changes is most instructive; but these changes have been brought about by the carrying out of its own principles, and there has therefore been no sacrifice of truthfulness, and, for the same reason, no loss of power. In Europe, so far as art can really be said to have a living tradition (and no works raised by professional architects can be adduced as evidence of this), it is confined to matters of comparatively slight importance; but in Japan the spirit of the men who raised its mightiest temples lives on with unabated vigour in their children, and the quiet power which can grapple with the gravest mechanical difficulties in structures even of stupendous size is exhibited also in the fashioning of a teacup or the adornment of a timber-nail.

It is humiliating to learn, as we learn from Dr. Dresser's

admirable and singularly interesting work on Japan,¹ that the effort to arrest this living art has come first from Englishmen, who cannot disabuse themselves of the notion that it is their special mission to insist everywhere on the need of building in stone. Finding themselves in a land where almost every building, large or small, is of wood, they could not resist the conclusion that they would be doing a good work if they could persuade the people to abandon the less for the more durable material. They forgot, however, to ask which was likely to be the more durable material in Japan, or to acquaint themselves with the past architectural history of the country. They forgot that the Japanese islands are exposed to almost incessant shocks from earthquakes, and that under such conditions it might tax the utmost power of any people to determine how buildings should be raised of a mass not very much smaller than that of York Minster. Such buildings are common enough in Japan. The porch of the great Temple of Todaiji rests on wooden pillars a hundred feet in height by twelve feet in circumference; and this porch simply furnishes access to another porch of equal size, behind which stands the temple itself, of the size of which we may form some idea from the fact that within it is placed a colossal image of the Buddha, fifty-three feet in height, with a nimbus surrounding the head eighty-three feet in diameter. Not less vast are the proportions of the great sanctuary at Nara, where the columns of a hundred feet in height consist of a single stem. It is even more astonishing to learn that these structures, vast in size and splendid in the decoration of every part, blazing with gold and colours as gorgeous now, after a lapse of a thousand years, as they were at first, belong to an age compared with which that of our greatest cathedrals and churches must almost be called modern. The Temple of Nara was nearly three centuries old before Edward the Confessor laid the foundations of his church of Westminster and Harold reared the massive piers and arches of Waltham. Dr. Dresser may well ask, 'What buildings can we show in England which have existed since the eighth century and are yet almost as perfect as when first built? and yet our buildings rest on a solid foundation, and not on earth which is constantly rocked by natural convulsion.' In truth, a deep and solid foundation of stone would, in Japan, involve not merely the risk but the certainty of destruction for any large building attached to it, as buildings are attached to their foundations in

¹ *Japan: its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures*. By Christopher Dresser, Ph.D. Longmans, 1882.

Europe. We can understand, therefore, the practical wisdom which led the Japanese to build their houses as little more than a roof standing on a series of legs, the sides being shutters moving as slides, and taken away altogether during summer. The supports rest usually on round-topped stones, just high enough to raise the timber uprights above any water that might lie upon the ground. The same practical wisdom is seen in the method of dealing with the far greater difficulty of guarding lofty towers against the force of earthquakes. The ingenuity of European engineers and architects would probably be sadly at a loss in dealing with the problems involved in the erection and support of the magnificent Pagoda at Nikko. In this building Dr. Dresser remarked, with natural and extreme surprise, what looked like a wanton waste of material; he was even more surprised and offended on seeing an enormous log of wood in the centre of the structure, ascending from its base to the apex. At the top, he tells us, this mass of timber was nearly two feet in diameter, and lower down a log equally large was bolted to each of the four sides of this central mass. His denunciation of the absurd waste of material was met by the rejoinder that the walls must be strong to support the central block; and on his replying that the central block was not supported by the sides, he was led to the top and there made to see that this huge central mass was suspended like the clapper of a bell. On descending to the bottom and lying on the ground he could see, further, that there was an inch of space intervening between the soil and this mighty pendulum, which goes far towards ensuring the safety of the building during earthquakes. For centuries, at least, the centre of gravity has by its swinging been kept within the base; and it would assuredly be impossible in any land to adduce stronger evidence of scientific forethought on the part of architects in dealing with a question of extreme difficulty. The great damage to life and property often caused by earthquakes, especially in Japanese cities, may, it is true, be urged as a set-off against the high merit of Japanese builders; but we must remember that they have two great enemies to contend with. In towns built of wood they are exposed to the ravages of fire not less than to the convulsions of earthquake; and it is not easy to withstand the temptation to employ tiles as a roof-covering instead of thatch. The only available substance for the latter covering becomes highly combustible in warm weather; but there is no doubt that tiles loosened and hurled about in an earthquake cause many and serious disasters.



We have thus ample proof of foresight and conscientious care on the part of Japanese architects and workmen; and this thorough honesty is seen in every detail of their work—in every process, in short, of every art. But it is not pretended that there is anything mysterious in Japanese art generally. Its special interest lies in the light which it throws on the conditions necessary for the attainment of the highest excellence in any work. It is mere justice to Japanese workmen generally to say that there is a thoroughness in all that they do which imparts a wonderful charm to their mightiest buildings and to the minutest ornaments which decorate their walls. But nothing less than this can be said of English and Teutonic work generally until the so-called revival of art poisoned the waters at their source. In village churches, as in the grandest minsters, we may find details worked out with the most loving care and tenderness in positions where no human eye could espy them unless after long and toilsome search.

But the art of every people must have its characteristics; and the special marks of Japanese art are to be found in the complete devotion of the workmen to their work and in the singular love of birds and beasts displayed by all. Both these features Dr. Dresser traces to the influence of religion. Shintoism, which made the altar or hearth an object of the deepest reverence and affection, led to infinite patience and ingenuity in its ornamentation; and Buddhism, by insisting on the sacredness of animal life, implanted in the Japanese that tenderness of feeling for all animals which makes butterflies alight on the hands of children, and frees even beasts of chase from all fear of man. The theory may be a true one; but the statement of it must be taken with some qualification, if we refer only to some facts made known to us by Dr. Dresser himself. The devouring of a large living fish is a prominent feature in the banquets of the richer Japanese; but with some little inconsistency Dr. Dresser remarks that the infliction of suffering on one of the lower creatures causes probably no self-reproach amongst a people who appear to regard neither pain nor death with dread.

Whatever be its origin, the devotion of the Japanese workman to his work, and his intense appreciation of all that is beautiful and of much that is grand in the sensible world, are alike unquestionable; and throughout its history generally the circumstances of the country have greatly favoured the growth of these dispositions. If the principle of division of labour, which is nowa-

days supposed to be the very foundation of Western civilisation, is not unknown among them, the Japanese workman has always been disposed to carry his work himself through every one of its stages, whether his task be that of working in metal or lacquer, of preparing woven fabrics, or of pottery in any of its branches. Each workman thus looks on his work, while it is going on, as on a child that he loves. It is his creation in the same sense in which a poem or a picture is the creation of a poet or a painter; and the feelings which it excites in him are not less strong. He is striving after beauty in every shape, not after money; and he has his recompense in a way which must cause some surprise to Englishmen. In Japan the merchant, Dr. Dresser assures us, has no status whatever, though he be as rich as Croesus. Money alone, he adds, buys no position, and a prince will spend hours in conversation with a skilled workman, while the richest merchant would be beneath his notice. Some of the greatest of Japanese potters and lacquer-workers may be said to know nothing of money, the wife or child taking charge of the work when it leaves the hand of the master, who takes no thought for anything else. The establishment of feudalism under the Daimios, although it involved fierce persecutions of the Buddhist monks, in no way affected the conditions needed for the growth of the highest art in Japan. The palace of the baron became to the workman what the monastery had been thus far. He became one of the chief's retainers, clothed, fed, and lodged by him, the return expected from him being the production of the best work in his power; and with this golden leisure and freedom from care his power was increased tenfold. Thus has been developed not merely a patience altogether marvellous in the most minute and complete finishing of every detail, not merely a mechanical excellence seldom equalled and never surpassed; but a power of delineating life, especially the life of birds and beasts, which places the Japanese in the front rank of the artists of any age or country. It is strange to see in drawings which exhibit great defects of general perspective, portraits of animals which actually live on the canvas or the paper. We may look at a parliament of storks, each in a different attitude, all studied with the most affectionate care—all made, we might say, to show their thoughts without imparting to them in the smallest degree the appearance of exaggeration or caricature. We may fix our eyes on a peacock, radiant with a splendour of colouring which brings out the wonderful vigour of the drawing; and then we may go on to mark that this power is

not confined to the treatment of such subjects on flat surfaces. The metal-caster will not hesitate to cast a crowd of birds in their flight, the birds composing it being almost separate one from the other, and yet forming one continuous casting.

The whole field of Japanese art enforces the one lesson which bids us do with all our might whatever we may have to do. The ceiling of a temple soaring in the sun as high as the vault of Westminster is worked up with the same unwearying care which is bestowed on a bracelet or a lacquer-box. Hinges and locks are fashioned with equal boldness and grace; and some nails, figured by Dr. Dresser from the doors of a temple at Nara, are objects on which the eye must rest with exquisite delight. In short, if we were seeking simply to point out the merits of Japanese workmanship, we should have to go through every branch in the art of a people who have carried their art into everything. But, to say the least, it is our duty, if we care to promote art-education in this country, to note every point in which the Japanese not merely leave us far behind in the race, but in which they teach us lessons which we have not yet learnt. Here we know nothing of the splendid effects of colour attained by combining metallic alloys with pure metals, or of the value of reflected light in relation to metal composition. But Dr. Dresser rightly insists even more strongly on the need of considering well the influence which the Japanese method of writing has in fostering the power of a child to seize the outlines of natural form. The child must draw the multitude of characters used as the signs of the written language. These he draws with a brush, holding the paper, which is absorbent, in his hand. Thus the whole arm works, motion being got from the shoulder, the elbow, and the wrist alike. From the first, therefore, the Japanese child in learning to write is unconsciously learning to draw with a free hand. Here he would learn to write with a hard pen or pencil; and with the same hard point he would make his first attempts at free-hand drawing, and only after he had become accustomed to the hard point would he have the yielding brush placed in his fingers. By the Japanese method the child learns the value of touches with a thoroughness impracticable under any other system, and the admixture of solid black with outline drawing imparts an effectiveness and life to much of his work which is wholly lacking in many of the productions of our art schools. On this point no one who will examine the extremely beautiful examples given by Dr. Dresser in the first chapter of the second part of his volume can remain in any doubt.

No adequate conception of Japanese art can be formed by those who are not acquainted with its colouring. The brightest and the strongest hues, red, blue, green, white, and gold, are employed in all their intensity. The greater part of the space to be covered is broken up by patterns interlacing each other often with astonishing intricacy; but some broad mass of leading colour is always interposed unbroken at definite intervals to impart solidity to the whole. It would not be too much to say that the magnificence of the Sainte Chapelle of St. Louis is but poor in comparison with the splendour of some of the greatest Japanese temples; and for majestic and solemn impressiveness, so far as we refer to colour, the advantage would rest altogether with the latter. We have to imagine the elaborate panelled vault of the ceiling soaring a hundred feet above us, while the overhanging roof, extended nearly to the railings of the balcony surrounding the shrine, softens the intensity of the sunlight, the light which ultimately reaches the ceiling being all reflected from a floor of black lacquer which has received the highest polish.

The art of Japan is, indeed, a subject which will well repay all the care with which we may study it. There is probably no reason for thinking that the study will make any Englishman blindly idolise it. It has wonderful merits. It ought to teach us some important and very needful lessons; but the forms which it employs, beautiful though they may be, fall short of the exquisite dignity, grace, and loveliness which mark the work of the Teutonic races while Teutonic art was still a living tradition, and which remains to us as a rich inheritance, until patient and honest work makes it a living tradition once more.

GEORGE W. COX.

A Wasted Afternoon in Sutherland.

AH! what an azure day!
 Beneath the granite gray
 The sulky ferox lay
 And waved a fin;
 Above his surly head
 The amber river sped,
 Shrunk in its summer bed,
 Limpid and thin.

We heard the eddies lisp;
 Deep in the heather crisp
 We lay to watch Canisp
 And Suilven blue;
 Between their crags, behold,
 A sheet of polished gold,
 Where Fewn drew fold by fold
 Her waters through.

'Hopeless the gray fly's wiles!
 Our dusky ferox smiles;
 We have trudged for miles and miles
 In vain, in vain;
 Better the storm that fills
 The thunder-coloured rills,
 Better the shrouded hills
 And drifts of rain!'

But 'No! ah! no!' I cried;
 'This lovely mountain-side,
 In faintest purple dyed
 And golden gray,
 Will live in vision still
 When nerves forget to thrill,
 When hands have lost the skill
 To play and slay!'

But still he watched the sky
With discontented eye,
For never a cloud was nigh,
Nor stormy flag ;
Noon fell to afternoon,
Till, like a change of tune,
The delicate virgin moon
Stepped from the crag.

So, through that sleepy weather,
Our rods and we together
Lay on the springing heather,
Assuaged at last,
And now, through memory's haze,
Best of our fishing days
Seems just that cloudless blaze,
With never a cast.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

A Cabal at the Théâtre Français.

THOSE who are conversant with the lighter French literature of the last century have doubtless read, or tried to read, 'Angola,' a strange production published anonymously, with the usual accompaniments of frontispiece and vignettes, and purporting to be an exact description of the society and manners of the time. It is neither better nor worse than the generality of novels of the period; inferior to those of Crébillon the younger in style and felicity of expression, but not without a certain gaiety and animation, the effect of which is too frequently marred by an affectation of language apparently copied from the 'Dictionnaire des Précieuses.' It is, however, a curious book, and, although now almost forgotten, obtained at the time of its appearance a fair share of popularity, less perhaps on account of its intrinsic merits than because, notwithstanding the absence of an author's name on the title-page, it was known to have been written by the Chevalier de la Morlière, an episode in whose life we are about to narrate.

This singular personage, born at the very commencement of the eighteenth century, and dying within a few years of its close, was a native of Grenoble, and began his career as a 'mousquetaire' during the Regency of the Duke of Orleans. Shortly after receiving his appointment he came to Paris, where, as far as his slender finances permitted, he frequented the society of young men of his own age, and speedily became notorious both from his overweening arrogance and from his skill as a swordsman. He lorded it at the cafés and other places of public resort, where his especial friends and admirers were wont to assemble; and by the hardihood of his opinions, and his readiness to maintain them against all comers, acquired a sort of influence as a literary and dramatic censor, which even the actors of the Comédie Française—in those days by no means the most submissive of mortals—were compelled to recognise. With the exception of 'Angola,' his attempts at authorship had been signal failures; half-a-dozen other novels of a very inferior stamp and a host of pamphlets on every conceivable subject had fallen still-born from the press, while of his two

comedies, 'La Créole' and 'Le Gouverneur,' produced respectively at the Théâtre Français and the Comédie Italienne, neither had survived the first night's ordeal. These mortifying results, though he affected to treat them philosophically, were scarcely calculated to render him indulgent to his more fortunate colleagues; and he had little difficulty in organising a regular cabal of which he was the head, the subordinate members being any chance recruits, such as disappointed playwrights or literary hacks, who passed most of their time at the Café Procope, and who eagerly seized the opportunity offered them of venting their spite against a successful dramatist, or a comedian by whom their own pieces had been refused. Posting themselves in different parts of the theatre, but always under the eye of their chief, they awaited his signal to commence the attack; and conducted their operations so skilfully that many of the uninitiated spectators, far from imagining that they were acting in concert, concluded that the play or the performer, whichever might happen to be the object of that night's disapprobation, deserved to be hissed, and not unfrequently added their own sibilations to those of the conspirators. This state of things had continued for some months, and at least half-a-dozen pieces had already been brought to an untimely end by their combined efforts, when, as ill-luck would have it, the victim next selected proved more than a match for the cabal, and—but we will let the Chevalier tell his own story.

'Mlle. Clairon was then at the height of her reputation, and reigned despotically over the Théâtre Français. I never admired her acting, but preferred a thousand times the energy and passion of Mlle. Dumesnil to the so-called 'classic' frigidity of her rival. I was not the only one who disputed the sovereign merit of the latter, although no one else dared to say so; I was aware of her vanity, and took delight in mortifying it. She perceived my intention and openly declared that I should soon have good reason to regret having offended her; but I despised her threats, and, as the sequel will show, I was wrong. I ought to have remembered that the personal intercession of Queen Marie Leczinska had alone prevented Fréron from being imprisoned at her instigation. Not that she contemplated doing me the honour of sending me to the Fort-l'Évêque; she had another plan in view, as you will see.

'It was, I think, in 1761, that M. de Voltaire's tragedy of 'Tancred' first made its appearance on the stage of the Comédie Française. A few minutes before the commencement of the per-

formance I entered the theatre, and took my usual seat in the pit. I had just left the Café Procope, where I had expressed my opinion pretty freely respecting the forthcoming novelty, avowing my hostility both to the author and to Mlle. Clairon, and prophesying that the piece would never reach the fourth act. Each of my friends was at his post, ready to second me in my crusade against the bad taste of the public; so I sat down quite at my ease, and calmly awaited the rising of the curtain. My two neighbours on either side were strangers to me, and I took no particular notice of them beyond remarking that both more resembled 'forts de la Halle' than habitual frequenters of the theatre, my attention being drawn to 'Tancrède,' which had just begun. I allowed the earlier scenes to pass without interruption, but towards the end of the first act prepared myself for a vigorous manifestation of discontent. I had, however, hardly uttered a prefatory murmur, when the two individuals on my right and left simultaneously pressed so closely on me, that I was nearly stifled. A cry of pain escaped me, upon which they drew back a little; but as soon as I had recovered my breath, and opened my lips to protest against a passage in the play which struck me as commonplace, they closed in upon me a second time, and with such force that I was literally jammed in between them. Without once turning their eyes in my direction, and to all appearance deeply interested in what was going on, they held me so tightly that it was impossible for me to move; until, seeing that I remained perfectly quiet, they again retreated, paying no attention to my indignant remonstrances, which were lost amid the shouts of the author's partisans at the close of the act. When the next began, I was more determined than ever to express my opinion with regard to Mlle. Clairon, and was in the act of taking from my pocket the whistle I always carried with me on these occasions, when my right-hand neighbour, grasping my arm so violently that the whistle fell on the ground, muttered in my ear, 'Silence!' This was too much, and I struggled to release myself, when my other arm was suddenly seized by the individual on my left, who in a very significant tone bade me be still. I tried to rise from my seat, but, pinned as I was, I could not.

'If you say a word or make the slightest movement,' whispered my persecutor on the right, 'we have strict orders to turn you out of the theatre.'

'Perceiving that I was in the hands of two police agents in disguise, and that any attempt at resistance would be both

physically impracticable and derogatory to my dignity, I merely inquired if they knew me.

‘Certainly, monsieur,’ replied the same individual. ‘You are the Chevalier de la Morlière, and my comrade and I are here to watch you.’

‘To-day only?’

‘To-day and to-morrow, and every day until further orders.’

‘By what right?’ I asked.

‘Hush! Don’t you hear Mlle. Clairon speaking. What an actress, what a glorious creature she is!’ he cried, applauding with all his might.

‘I felt myself growing purple with rage, and, turning to my neighbour on the left, who appeared less enthusiastically disposed, ‘It seems then,’ I said, ‘that in future, whenever I come to the theatre, I am condemned to sit between you and your comrade?’

‘Exactly, Monsieur le Chevalier, and for my part I am delighted, for no one is a greater admirer of M. de Voltaire’s tragedies.’

‘I ought to be flattered,’ I remarked with affected calmness, ‘that my company gives you such pleasure.’

‘Ours need not be disagreeable to Monsieur le Chevalier, if he chose,’ he replied in a significant tone.

‘How do you mean?’

‘Monsieur has only to abstain from expressing any disapprobation; no very difficult matter when the piece is like the one they are playing now. Listen, monsieur, is it possible to imagine anything finer? Bravo, Voltaire!’

‘Bravo, Clairon!’ shouted the other.

‘My position was no longer endurable, and at the close of the third act I rose from my seat and abruptly quitted the theatre, boiling with suppressed fury, and invoking maledictions on the actress who had played me this scurvy trick. For the next two days I carefully kept aloof from the scene of my disaster, but towards the end of the week from sheer force of habit returned thither, and found my two agents, as I expected, awaiting my arrival. Ushering me to my seat with a profusion of bows, they placed themselves as before on either side of me; but this time I had determined to go upon a different tack, and give them no opportunity of molesting me. To their great astonishment I remained perfectly still, although I confess that the martyrdom I underwent in listening with an indifferent air to M. de Voltaire’s rhapsodies was almost beyond my powers of endurance, and

stoically refrained from the slightest mark of impatience or dissatisfaction until the curtain finally dropped, and my sufferings were at an end. I felt sure that the day would come when I should have the laugh on my side, and I had not long to wait.

'The next novelty produced at the Théâtre Français was not, I rejoice to say, by Voltaire; but an adaptation by Saurin of a lugubrious English drama by Thomson, entitled 'Blanche et Guiscard,' the subject of which was taken from Gil Blas. In it Clairon had a principal part, of which report spoke highly, and had received instructions from Garrick how to play it. I was the more disposed to be critical on this occasion, having myself previously treated a similar subject, and offered my piece to the managing committee, who had unanimously refused it. Under these circumstances, it was impossible for me to avoid being present at the first performance of 'Blanche et Guiscard.'

'I found my two agents at the door of the theatre, evidently expecting me. When we were seated, the one on my right, addressing me with obsequious civility, deigned to express his regret at my absence during the last week, assuring me that I had missed some delightful pieces. 'However,' he added, 'we felt certain that M. le Chevalier would be here to-night, as all Paris is anxious to see the novelty.'

'Who are the principal actors in the new piece?' I inquired in an indifferent tone.

'Bellecour, Mlle. Dubois, and Clairon.'

'Ah! Mlle. Dubois is a pretty girl.'

'Charming, monsieur.'

'And what do people say of the piece?' I continued.

'*Ma foi*, monsieur, what can they say of it until they have seen it acted?' interposed my left-hand neighbour with a self-satisfied grin.

'I mean, is it likely to be a success or a failure?'

'Oh, monsieur, a success of course.'

'Why of course?'

'Because the author, M. Saurin, is a member of the Academy.'

'That proves nothing,' I remarked.

'It proves quite enough for us,' he replied sullenly, and the conversation dropped. The first act of 'Blanche et Guiscard,' notwithstanding some picturesque scenery and costumes, struck me as insufferably tedious; and, careful as I was to avoid any open display of hostility, I could not resist the temptation of indulging in a hearty yawn, which proved so contagious that both my

neighbours unsuspiciously followed my example. A repetition of the same manoeuvre gradually infected those around me, and by the middle of the third act, the entire pit, boxes, and gallery were yawning as if for a wager. I watched these symptoms of weariness, which boded no good to M. Saurin's drama, with intense delight, and every now and then fanned the flame by a fresh demonstration. In vain the actors exerted themselves to the utmost, the insidious enemy was too much for them, and little by little they, in their turn, yielded to its influence. From that moment the fate of the piece was decided, and I was on the point of risking a fracture of my jaw by way of giving it a final quietus, when my neighbour on the right, perceiving at length how matters stood, suddenly checked me.

'Monsieur le Chevalier,' he whispered, 'allow me to remind you that you are going too far.'

'In what way?' I asked.

'Every one can understand that you are yawning on purpose.'

'How can I help yawning if the piece bores me?'

'The agents looked at each other, visibly embarrassed.

'True,' murmured the one on my left.

'If it does bore you,' growled the one on my right, 'you need not let other people see it.'

'Tell me frankly,' I said, looking the last speaker full in the face, 'does it amuse you?'

'I can't say that it does,' was his candid reply.

'This settled the question, and they allowed me without further hindrance to contribute my share of yawns to the general fund; and I felt, as I remarked the listless indifference of the public to the woes of the unfortunate 'Blanche et Guiscard,' that I had gained my point, and emerged victorious from a struggle in which the odds were certainly not in my favour.

'But I had yet to learn with what an implacable adversary I had to deal, and I soon discovered to my cost that the annoyances to which I had hitherto been subjected were trifles compared to what was about to follow. Finding that her efforts to stifle my opposition had signally failed, Mlle. Clairon determined to crush me altogether, and rid herself of my unwelcome presence in a way that, I confess, I little expected. Profiting by the exceptional position enjoyed by her, she solicited and obtained from M. de Sartine, the lieutenant of police, an order prohibiting me in future from entering the Comédie Française; and this iniquitous infraction of

the law was duly notified to me. Justly indignant at such unheard-of exercise of arbitrary power, I applied to the magistrate in question for redress; and, after several vain attempts, succeeded in obtaining an interview with him, but to no purpose, for he very curtly informed me that he could do nothing for me.

‘The fact is,’ he said, ‘Mlle. Clairon has great influence, and you have none; besides, your reputation is, to say the least, very much against you, and you have brought this upon yourself. If you have not chosen to attend to the warnings already given you, it is your own fault.’

‘But,’ I objected, ‘there is no law that justifies such a prohibition.’

‘True,’ he replied, ‘but Mlle. Clairon has enlisted on her side all the ‘gentlemen of the chamber;’ she has told them that it is quite impossible for her to act in the presence—I use her own words—of a monster like you, and that, unless her demand be complied with, she will retire from the stage.’

‘Very likely,’ I remarked, ‘considering that hardly a week passes without her threatening the same thing.’

‘That may be,’ coldly answered M. de Sartine, ‘but it is no affair of mine—I merely obey orders;’ and, turning his back on me as a sign that the interview was at an end, he left me to my own reflections.

‘What was I to do? Submit patiently to the insult, and tacitly own myself in the wrong; or boldly continue the struggle, and prove that the Chevalier de la Morlière was not to be humiliated by the caprice of an ambitious and vindictive woman? I chose the latter alternative, and commenced operations by laying before the authorities a detailed statement of my case, which no one took the trouble of reading. I endeavoured to interest in my favour several influential personages of the Court, but in vain; the few who listened to me shrugged their shoulders with evident indifference, and declined to interfere. As a last resource, I resolved to appeal to the sympathy of my fellow-citizens, and circulated a memoir in which I demanded by what right I alone was debarred from frequenting a place of public entertainment, a privilege open to all who had the money to pay for it. This had the desired effect; for, in order to avoid a popular scandal, the lieutenant of police, turning a deaf ear to the entreaties and menaces of Mlle. Clairon, decided on withdrawing the veto, and I was once more at liberty to pass my evenings unmolested in my usual place at the Comédie

Française. Had this occurred in Venice, it is probable that my pertinacity would have entailed on me the unpleasant consequences of an inch or two of cold steel; whereas in Paris, fortunately for me, a 'bravo' is not yet a national institution, or I should hardly have lived to tell my story.'

CHARLES HERVEY.

The Three Strangers.

AMONG the few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries, may be reckoned the high, grassy, and furzy downs, coombs, or ewe-leases, as they are indifferently called, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and south-west. If any mark of human occupation is met with hereon it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down, and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than five miles from a county town. Yet, what of that? Five miles of irregular upland, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleet, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or a Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellant tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others who 'conceive and meditate of pleasant things.'

Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge, is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwellings. But, in the present case, such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and undefended. The only reason for its precise situation seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hundred years. The house was thus exposed to the elements on all sides. But, though the wind up here blew unmistakably when it did blow, and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the coomb as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their sufferings from the exposure, they said that upon the whole they were less inconvenienced by 'wuzzes and flames' (hoarses and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighbouring valley.

The night of March 28, 182-, was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rainstorm smote walls, slopes, and hedges like the clothyard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and outdoor animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the wind; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside-out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eaves-droppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and they were all now assembled in the chief or living-room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cosy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly-polished sheep-crooks without stems that were hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family Bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half-a-dozen candles, having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days, and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney-piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney-piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a back-brand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns, that crackled 'like the laughter of the fool.'

Nineteen persons were gathered here. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window-bench; four men, including Charley Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New the parish-clerk, and John Pitcher, a neighbouring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle; a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pourparlers* on a life-companionship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upward moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unbampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each

other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever—which nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from the valley below, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for ministering to the needs of a coming family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind: the shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had thoughtfully brought with him his favourite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs. Fennel privately enjoining the players on no account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover, Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamoured of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as

long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs. Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly, she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had travelled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling, an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs. Fennel's concern about the growing fierceness of the dance corresponded in point of time with the ascent of a human figure to the solitary hill of Higher Crowstairs from the direction of the distant town. This personage strode on through the rain without a pause, following the little-worn path which, further on in its course, skirted the shepherd's cottage.

It was nearly the time of full moon, and on this account, though the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping cloud, ordinary objects out of doors were readily visible. The sad wan light revealed the lonely pedestrian to be a man of supple frame; his gait suggested that he had somewhat passed the period of perfect and instinctive agility, though not so far as to be otherwise than rapid of motion, when occasion required. In point of fact he might have been about forty years of age. He appeared tall, but a recruiting sergeant, or other person accustomed to the judging of men's heights by the eye, would have discerned that this was chiefly owing to his gauntness, and that he was not more than five feet eight or nine.

Notwithstanding the regularity of his tread, there was caution in it, as in that of one who mentally feels his way; and despite the fact that it was not a black coat nor a dark garment of any sort that he wore, there was something about him which suggested that he naturally belonged to the black-coated tribes of men. His clothes were of fustian, and his boots hobnailed, yet in his progress he showed not the mud-accustomed bearing of hobnailed and fustianed peasantry.

By the time that he had arrived abreast of the shepherd's premises the rain came down, or rather came along, with yet more determined violence. The outskirts of the little homestead

partially broke the force of wind and rain, and this induced him to stand still. The most salient of the shepherd's domestic erections was an empty sty at the forward corner of his hedgeless garden, for in these latitudes the principle of masking the homelier features of your establishment by a conventional frontage was unknown. The traveller's eye was attracted to this small building by the pallid shine of the wet slates that covered it. He turned aside, and, finding it empty, stood under the pent-roof for shelter.

While he stood, the boom of the serpent within, and the lesser strains of the fiddler, reached the spot as an accompaniment to the surging hiss of the flying rain on the sod, its louder beating on the cabbage-leaves of the garden, on the eight or ten bee-hives just discernible by the path, and its dripping from the eaves into a row of buckets and pans that had been placed under the walls of the cottage. For at Higher Crowstairs, as at all such elevated domiciles, the grand difficulty of housekeeping was an insufficiency of water; and a casual rainfall was utilised by turning out, as catchers, every utensil that the house contained. Some queer stories might be told of the contrivances for economy in suds and dish-waters that are absolutely necessitated in upland habitations during the droughts of summer. But at this season there were no such exigencies: a mere acceptance of what the skies bestowed was sufficient for an abundant store.

At last the notes of the serpent ceased and the house was silent. This cessation of activity aroused the solitary pedestrian from the reverie into which he had lapsed, and, emerging from the shed, with an apparently new intention, he walked up the path to the house-door. Arrived here, his first act was to kneel down on a large stone beside the row of vessels, and to drink a copious draught from one of them. Having quenched his thirst, he rose and lifted his hand to knock, but paused with his eye upon the panel. Since the dark surface of the wood revealed absolutely nothing, it was evident that he must be mentally looking through the door, as if he wished to measure thereby all the possibilities that a house of this sort might include, and how they might bear upon the question of his entry.

In his indecision he turned and surveyed the scene around. Not a soul was anywhere visible. The garden-path stretched downward from his feet, gleaming like the track of a snail; the roof of the little well (mostly dry), the well cover, the top rail of the garden-gate, were varnished with the same dull liquid glaze;

while, far away in the vale, a faint whiteness of more than usual extent showed that the rivers were high in the meads. Beyond all this winked a few bleared lamplights through the beating drops, lights that denoted the situation of the county-town from which he had appeared to come. The absence of all notes of life in that direction seemed to clinch his intentions, and he knocked at the door.

Within, a desultory chat had taken the place of movement and musical sound. The hedge-carpenter was suggesting a song to the company, which nobody just then was inclined to undertake, so that the knock afforded a not unwelcome diversion.

‘Walk in!’ said the shepherd promptly.

The latch clicked upward, and out of the night our pedestrian appeared upon the door-mat. The shepherd arose, snuffed two of the nearest candles, and turned to look at him.

Their light disclosed that the stranger was dark in complexion, and not unprepossessing as to feature. His hat, which for a moment he did not remove, hung low over his eyes, without concealing that they were large, open, and determined, moving with a flash rather than a glance round the room. He seemed pleased with the survey, and, baring his shaggy head, said, in a rich deep voice, ‘The rain is so heavy, friends, that I ask leave to come in and rest awhile.’

‘To be sure, stranger,’ said the shepherd. ‘And faith, you’ve been lucky in choosing your time, for we are having a bit of a fling for a glad cause—though to be sure a man could hardly wish that glad cause to happen more than once a year.’

‘Nor less,’ spoke up a woman. ‘For ’tis best to get your family over and done with, as soon as you can, so as to be all the earlier out of the fag o’t.’

‘And what may be this glad cause?’ asked the stranger.

‘A birth and christening,’ said the shepherd.

The stranger hoped his host might not be made unhappy either by too many or too few of such episodes, and being invited by a gesture to a pull at the mug, he readily acquiesced. His manner which, before entering, had been so dubious, was now altogether that of a careless and candid man.

‘Late to be traipsing athwart this coomb—hey?’ said the engaged man of fifty.

‘Late it is, master, as you say.—I’ll take a seat in the chimney-corner, if you have nothing to urge against it, ma’am; for I am a little moist on the side that was next the rain.’

Mrs. Shepherd Fennel assented, and made room for the self-invited comer, who, having got completely inside the chimney-corner, stretched out his legs and his arms with the expansiveness of a person quite at home.

'Yes, I am rather thin in the vamp,' he said freely, seeing that the eyes of shepherd's wife fell upon his boots, 'and I am not well-fitted, either. I have had some rough times lately, and have been forced to pick up what I can get in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working-days when I reach home.'

'One of hereabouts?' she inquired.

'Not quite that—further up the country.'

'I thought so. And so am I; and by your tongue you come from my neighbourhood.'

'But you would hardly have heard of me,' he said quickly. 'My time would be long before yours, ma'am, you see.'

This testimony to the youthfulness of his hostess had the effect of stopping her cross-examination.

'There is only one thing more wanted to make me happy,' continued the new comer. 'And that is a little baccy, which I am sorry to say I am out of.'

'I'll fill your pipe,' said the shepherd.

'I must ask you to lend me a pipe likewise.'

'A smoker, and no pipe about ye?'

'I have dropped it somewhere on the road.'

The shepherd filled and handed him a new clay pipe, saying, as he did so, 'Hand me your baccy-box—I'll fill that too, now I am about it.'

The man went through the movement of searching his pockets.

'Lost that too?' said his entertainer, with some surprise.

'I am afraid so,' said the man with some confusion. 'Give it to me in a screw of paper.' Lighting his pipe at the candle with a suction that drew the whole flame into the bowl, he resettled himself in the corner, and bent his looks upon the faint steam from his damp legs, as if he wished to say no more.

Meanwhile the general body of guests had been taking little notice of this visitor by reason of an absorbing discussion in which they were engaged with the band about a tune for the next dance. The matter being settled, they were about to stand up, when an interruption came in the shape of another knock at the door.

At sound of the same the man in the chimney-corner took up the poker and began stirring the fire as if doing it thoroughly were

the one aim of his existence ; and a second time the shepherd said 'Walk in !' In a moment another man stood upon the straw-woven door-mat. He too was a stranger.

This individual was one of a type radically different from the first. There was more of the commonplace in his manner, and a certain jovial cosmopolitanism sat upon his features. He was several years older than the first arrival, his hair being slightly frosted, his eyebrows bristly, and his whiskers cut back from his cheeks. His face was rather full and flabby, and yet it was not altogether a face without power. A few grog-blossoms marked the neighbourhood of his nose. He flung back his long drab greatcoat, revealing that beneath it he wore a suit of cinder-grey shade throughout, large heavy seals, of some metal or other that would take a polish, dangling from his fob as his only personal ornament. Shaking the water-drops from his low-crowned glazed hat, he said, 'I must ask for a few minutes' shelter, comrades, or I shall be wetted to my skin before I get to Casterbridge.'

'Make yerself at home, master,' said the shepherd, perhaps a trifle less heartily than on the first occasion. Not that Fennel had the least tinge of niggardliness in his composition ; but the room was far from large, spare chairs were not numerous, and damp companions were not altogether comfortable at close quarters for the women and girls in their bright-coloured gowns.

However, the second comer, after taking off his greatcoat, and hanging his hat on a nail in one of the ceiling-beams as if he had been specially invited to put it there, advanced and sat down at the table. This had been pushed so closely into the chimney-corner, to give all available room to the dancers, that its inner edge grazed the elbow of the man who had ensconced himself by the fire ; and thus the two strangers were brought into close companionship. They nodded to each other by way of breaking the ice of unacquaintance, and the first stranger handed his neighbour the large mug—a huge vessel of brown ware, having its upper edge worn away like a threshold by the rub of whole genealogies of thirsty lips that had gone the way of all flesh, and bearing the following inscription burnt upon its rotund side in yellow letters :—

THERE IS NO FUN
UNTILL I CUM.

The other man, nothing loth, raised the mug to his lips, and drank on, and on, and on—till a curious blueness overspread the countenance of the shepherd's wife, who had regarded with no

little surprise the first stranger's free offer to the second of what did not belong to him to dispense.

'I knew it!' said the toper to the shepherd with much satisfaction. 'When I walked up your garden afore coming in, and saw the hives all of a row, I said to myself, 'Where there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead.' But mead of such a truly comfortable sort as this I really didn't expect to meet in my older days.' He took yet another pull at the mug, till it assumed an ominous horizontality.

'Glad you enjoy it!' said the shepherd warmly.

'It is goodish mead,' assented Mrs. Fennel with an absence of enthusiasm, which seemed to say that it was possible to buy praise for one's cellar at too heavy a price. 'It is trouble enough to make—and really I hardly think we shall make any more. For honey sells well, and we can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin for common use from the comb-washings.'

'Oh, but you'll never have the heart!' reproachfully cried the stranger in cinder-grey, after taking up the mug a third time and setting it down empty. 'I love mead, when 'tis old like this, as I love to go to church o' Sundays, or to relieve the needy any day of the week.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' said the man in the chimney-corner, who, in spite of the taciturnity induced by the pipe of tobacco, could not or would not refrain from this slight testimony to his comrade's humour.

Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first-year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon—with its due complement of whites of eggs, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and processes of working, bottling, and cellaring—tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was. Hence, presently, the stranger in cinder-grey at the table, moved by its creeping influence, unbuttoned his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair, spread his legs, and made his presence felt in various ways.

'Well, well, as I say,' he resumed, 'I am going to Casterbridge, and to Casterbridge I must go. I should have been almost there by this time; but the rain drove me into ye; and I'm not sorry for it.'

'You don't live in Casterbridge?' said the shepherd.

'Not as yet; though I shortly mean to move there.'

'Going to set up in trade, perhaps?'

'No, no,' said the shepherd's wife. 'It is easy to see that the gentleman is rich, and don't want to work at anything.'

The cinder-grey stranger paused, as if to consider whether he

would accept that definition of himself. He presently rejected it by answering, 'Rich is not quite the word for me, dame. I do work, and I must work. And even if I only get to Casterbridge by midnight I must begin work there at eight to-morrow morning. Yes, het or wet, blow or snow, famine or sword, my day's work to-morrow must be done.'

'Poor man! Then, in spite o' seeming, you be worse off than we?' replied the shepherd's wife.

'Tis the nature of my trade, men and maidens. 'Tis the nature of my trade more than my poverty. . . . But really and truly I must up and off, or I shan't get a lodging in the town.' However, the speaker did not move, and directly added, 'There's time for one more draught of friendship before I go; and I'd perform it at once if the mug were not dry.'

'Here's a mug o' small,' said Mrs. Fennel. 'Small, we call it, though to be sure 'tis only the first wash o' the combs.'

'No,' said the stranger disdainfully. 'I won't spoil your first kindness by partaking o' your second.'

'Certainly not,' broke in Fennel. 'We don't increase and multiply every day, and I'll fill the mug again.' He went away to the dark place under the stairs where the barrel stood. The shepherdess followed him.

'Why should you do this?' she said reproachfully, as soon as they were alone. 'He's emptied it once, though it held enough for ten people; and now he's not contented wi' the small, but must needs call for more o' the strong! And a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part I don't like the look o' the man at all.'

'But he's in the house, my honey; and 'tis a wet night, and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? there'll be plenty more next bee-burning.'

'Very well—this time, then,' she answered, looking wistfully at the barrel. 'But what is the man's calling, and where is he one of, that he should come in and join us like this?'

'I don't know. I'll ask him again.'

'The catastrophe of having the mug drained dry at one pull by the stranger in cinder-grey was effectually guarded against this time by Mrs. Fennel. She poured out his allowance in a small cup, keeping the large one at a discreet distance from him. When he had tossed off his portion the shepherd renewed his inquiry about the stranger's occupation.

The latter did not immediately reply, and the man in the

chimney-corner, with sudden demonstrativeness, said, 'Anybody may know my trade—I'm a wheelwright.'

'A very good trade for these parts,' said the shepherd.

'And anybody may know mine—if they've the sense to find it out,' said the stranger in cinder-grey.

'You may generally tell what a man is by his claws,' observed the hedge-carpenter, looking at his hands. 'My fingers be as full of thorns as an old pincushion is of pins.'

The hands of the man in the chimney-corner instinctively sought the shade, and he gazed into the fire as he resumed his pipe. The man at the table took up the hedge-carpenter's remark, and added smartly, 'True; but the oddity of my trade is that, instead of setting a mark upon me, it sets a mark upon my customers.'

No observation being offered by anybody in elucidation of this enigma, the shepherd's wife once more called for a song. The same obstacles presented themselves as at the former time—one had no voice, another had forgotten the first verse. The stranger at the table, whose soul had now risen to a good working temperance, relieved the difficulty by exclaiming that, to start the company, he would sing himself. Thrusting one thumb into the arm-hole of his waistcoat, he waved the other hand in the air, and, with an extemporising gaze at the shining sheep-crooks above the mantelpiece, began:—

Oh my trade it is the rarest one,

Simple shepherds all—

My trade is a sight to see;

For my customers I tie, and take them up on high,

And waft 'em to a far countree.

The room was silent when he had finished the verse—with one exception, that of the man in the chimney-corner, who, at the singer's word, 'Chorus!' joined him in a deep bass voice of musical relish—

And waft 'em to a far countree.

Oliver Giles, John Pitcher the dairyman, the parish-clerk, the engaged man of fifty, the row of young women against the wall, seemed lost in thought not of the gayest kind. The shepherd looked meditatively on the ground, the shepherdess gazed keenly at the singer, and with some suspicion; she was doubting whether this stranger were merely singing an old song from recollection, or was composing one there and then for the occasion. All were

as perplexed at the obscure revelation as the guests at Belshazzar's Feast, except the man in the chimney-corner, who quietly said, 'Second verse, stranger,' and smoked on.

The singer thoroughly moistened himself from his lips inwards, and went on with the next stanza as requested :—

My tools are but common ones,

Simple shepherds all,

My tools are no sight to see :

A little hempen string, and a post whereon to swing,

Are implements enough for me.

Shepherd Fennel glanced round. There was no longer any doubt that the stranger was answering his question rhythmically. The guests one and all started back with suppressed exclamations. The young woman engaged to the man of fifty fainted half-way, and would have proceeded, but finding him wanting in alacrity for catching her she sat down trembling.

'Oh, he's the —— !' whispered the people in the background, mentioning the name of an ominous public officer. 'He's come to do it. 'Tis to be at Casterbridge gaol to-morrow—the man for sheep-stealing—the poor clock-maker we heard of, who used to live away at Anglebury and had no work to do—Timothy Sommers, whose family were a-starving, and so he went out of Anglebury by the high-road, and took a sheep in open daylight, defying the farmer and the farmer's wife and the farmer's man, and every man jack among 'em. He ' (and they nodded towards the stranger of the terrible trade) 'is come from up the country to do it because there's not enough to do in his own county-town, and he's got the place here now our own county man's dead ; he's going to live in the same cottage under the prison wall.'

The stranger in cinder-grey took no notice of this whispered string of observations, but again wetted his lips. Seeing that his friend in the chimney-corner was the only one who reciprocated his joviality in any way, he held out his cup towards that appreciative comrade, who also held out his own. They clinked together, the eyes of the rest of the room hanging upon the singer's actions. He parted his lips for the third verse ; but at that moment another knock was audible upon the door. This time the knock was faint and hesitating.

The company seemed scared ; the shepherd looked with consternation towards the entrance, and it was with some effort that he resisted his alarmed wife's deprecatory glance, and uttered for the third time the welcoming words, 'Walk in !'

The door was gently opened, and another man stood upon the mat. He, like those who had preceded him, was a stranger. This time it was a short, small personage, of fair complexion, and dressed in a decent suit of dark clothes.

‘Can you tell me the way to ——?’ he began; when, gazing round the room to observe the nature of the company amongst whom he had fallen, his eyes lighted on the stranger in cinder-grey. It was just at the instant when the latter, who had thrown his mind into his song with such a will that he scarcely heeded the interruption, silenced all whispers and inquiries by bursting into his third verse:—

To-morrow is my working day,
Simple shepherds all—

To-morrow is a working day for me:
For the farmer’s sheep is slain, and the lad who did it ta’en,
And on his soul may God ha’ mercy!

The stranger in the chimney-corner, waving cups with the singer so heartily that his mead splashed over on the hearth, repeated in his bass voice as before:—

And on his soul may God ha’ merc-y!

All this time the third stranger had been standing in the doorway. Finding now that he did not come forward or go on speaking, the guests particularly regarded him. They noticed to their surprise that he stood before them the picture of abject terror—his knees trembling, his hand shaking so violently that the door-latch by which he supported himself rattled audibly; his white lips were parted, and his eyes fixed on the merry officer of justice in the middle of the room. A moment more and he had turned, closed the door, and fled.

‘What a man can it be?’ said the shepherd.

The rest, between the awfulness of their late discovery and the odd conduct of this third visitor, looked as if they knew not what to think, and said nothing. Instinctively they withdrew further and further from the grim gentleman in their midst, whom some of them seemed to take for the Prince of Darkness himself, till they formed a remote circle, an empty space of floor being left between them and him—

— *circulus, cujus centrum diabolus.*

The room was so silent—though there were more than twenty people in it—that nothing could be heard but the patter of the rain against the window-shutters, accompanied by the occasional

hiss of a stray drop that fell down the chimney into the fire, and the steady puffing of the man in the corner, who had now resumed his pipe of long clay.

The stillness was unexpectedly broken. The distant sound of a gun reverberated through the air—apparently from the direction of the county-town.

‘Be jiggered!’ cried the stranger who had sung the song, jumping up.

‘What does that mean?’ asked several.

‘A prisoner escaped from the gaol—that’s what it means.’

All listened. The sound was repeated, and none of them spoke but the man in the chimney-corner, who said quietly, ‘I’ve often been told that in this county they fire a gun at such times; but I never heard it till now.’

‘I wonder if it is *my* man?’ murmured the personage in cinder-grey.

‘Surely it is!’ said the shepherd involuntarily. ‘And surely we’ve seen him! That little man who looked in at the door by now, and quivered like a leaf when he seed ye and heard your song.’

‘His teeth chattered, and the breath went out of his body,’ said the dairyman.

‘And his heart seemed to sink within him like a stone,’ said Oliver Giles.

‘And he bolted as if he’d been shot at,’ said the hedge-carpenter.

‘True—his teeth chattered, and his heart seemed to sink; and he bolted as if he’d been shot at,’ slowly summed up the man in the chimney-corner.

‘I didn’t notice it,’ remarked the grim songster.

‘We were all a-wondering what made him run off in such a fright,’ faltered one of the women against the wall, ‘and now ’tis explained.’

The firing of the alarm-gun went on at intervals, low and sullenly, and their suspicions became a certainty. The sinister gentleman in cinder-grey roused himself. ‘Is there a constable here?’ he asked in thick tones. ‘If so, let him step forward.’

The engaged man of fifty stepped quavering out of the corner, his betrothed beginning to sob on the back of the chair.

‘You are a sworn constable?’

‘I be, sir.’

‘Then pursue the criminal at once, with assistance, and bring him back here. . He can’t have gone far.’

'I will, sir, I will—when I've got my staff. I'll go home and get it, and come sharp here, and start in a body.'

'Staff!—never mind your staff; the man 'll be gone!'

'But I can't do nothing without my staff—can I, William, and John, and Charles Jake? No; for there's the king's royal crown a painted on en in yaller and gold, and the lion and the unicorn, so as when I raise en up and hit my prisoner, 'tis made a lawful blow thereby. I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man without my staff—no, not I. If I hadn't the law to gie me courage, why, instead o' my taking up him he might take up me!'

'Now, I'm a king's man myself, and can give you authority enough for this,' said the formidable person in cinder-grey. 'Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye any lanterns?'

'Yes—have ye any lanterns?—I demand it,' said the constable.

'And the rest of you able-bodied——'

'Able-bodied men—yes—the rest of ye,' said the constable.

'Have you some good stout staves and pitchforks——'

'Staves and pitchforks—in the name o' the law. And take 'em in yer hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell ye.'

Thus aroused, the men prepared to give chase. The evidence was, indeed, though circumstantial, so convincing, that but little argument was needed to show the shepherd's guests that after what they had seen it would look very much like connivance if they did not instantly pursue the unhappy third stranger, who could not as yet have gone more than a few hundred yards over such uneven country.

A shepherd is always well provided with lanterns; and, lighting these hastily, and with hurdle-staves in their hands, they poured out of the door, taking a direction along the crest of the hill, away from the town, the rain having fortunately a little abated.

Disturbed by the noise, or possibly by unpleasant dreams of her baptism, the child who had been christened began to cry heartbrokenly in the room overhead. These notes of grief came down through the chinks of the floor to the ears of the women below, who jumped up one by one, and seemed glad of the excuse to ascend and comfort the baby, for the incidents of the last half hour greatly oppressed them. Thus in the space of two or three minutes the room on the ground floor was deserted quite.

But it was not for long. Hardly had the sound of footsteps died away when a man returned round the corner of the house from the direction the pursuers had taken. Peeping in at the door, and seeing nobody there, he entered leisurely. It was the

stranger of the chimney-corner, who had gone out with the rest. The motive of his return was shown by his helping himself to a cut piece of skimmer-cake that lay on a ledge beside where he had sat, and which he had apparently forgotten to take with him. He also poured out half a cup more mead from the quantity that remained, ravenously eating and drinking these as he stood. He had not finished when another figure came in just as quietly—the stranger in cinder-grey.

‘Oh—you here?’ said the latter smiling. ‘I thought you had gone to help in the capture.’ And this speaker also revealed the object of his return by looking solicitously round for the fascinating mug of old mead.

‘And I thought you had gone,’ said the other, continuing his skimmer-cake with some effort.

‘Well, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without me,’ said the first confidentially, ‘and such a night as it is, too. Besides, ’tis the business o’ the Government to take care of its criminals—not mine.’

‘True; so it is. And I felt as you did, that there were enough without me.’

‘I don’t want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country.’

‘Nor I neither, between you and me.’

‘These shepherd-people are used to it—simple-minded souls, you know, stirred up to anything in a moment. They’ll have him ready for me before the morning, and no trouble to me at all.’

‘They’ll have him, and we shall have saved ourselves all labour in the matter.’

‘True, true. Well, my way is to Casterbridge; and ’tis as much a my legs will do to take me that far. Going the same way?’

‘No, I am sorry to say. I have to get home over there’ (he nodded indefinitely to the right), ‘and I feel as you do, that it is quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime.’

The other had by this time finished the mead in the mug, after which, shaking hands at the door, and wishing each other well, they went their several ways.

In the meantime the company of pursuers had reached the end of the hog’s-back elevation which dominated this part of the coomb. They had decided on no particular plan of action; and, finding that the man of the baleful trade was no longer in their company, they seemed quite unable to form any such plan now. They descended in all directions down the hill, and straightway

several of the party fell into the snare set by Nature for all misguided midnight ramblers over the lower cretaceous formation. The 'lynchets,' or flint slopes, which belted the escarpment at intervals of a dozen yards, took the less cautious ones unawares, and losing their footing on the rubbly steep they slid sharply downwards, the lanterns rolling from their hands to the bottom, and there lying on their sides till the horn was scorched through.

When they had again gathered themselves together, the shepherd, as the man who knew the country best, took the lead, and guided them round these treacherous inclines. The lanterns, which seemed rather to dazzle their eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration, were extinguished, due silence was observed; and in this more rational order they plunged into the vale. It was a grassy, briary, moist channel, affording some shelter to any person who had sought it; but the party perambulated it in vain, and ascended on the other side. Here they wandered apart, and after an interval closed together again to report progress. At the second time of closing in they found themselves near a lonely oak, the single tree on this part of the upland, probably sown there by a passing bird some hundred years before. And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself, appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond. The band noiselessly drew up and faced him.

'Your money or your life!' said the constable sternly to the still figure.

'No, no,' whispered John Pitcher. 'Tisn't our side ought to say that. That's the doctrine of vagabonds like him, and we be on the side of the law.'

'Well, well,' replied the constable impatiently; 'I must say something, mustn't I? and if you had all the weight o' this undertaking upon your mind, perhaps you'd say the wrong thing too.—Prisoner at the bar, surrender, in the name of the Fath—the Crown, I mane!'

The man under the tree seemed now to notice them for the first time, and, giving them no opportunity whatever for exhibiting their courage, he strolled slowly towards them. He was, indeed, the little man, the third stranger; but his trepidation had in a great measure gone.

'Well, travellers,' he said, 'did I hear ye speak to me?'

'You did: you've got to come and be our prisoner at once,' said the constable. 'We arrest ye on the charge of not biding in

Casterbridge gaol in a decent proper manner to be hung to-morrow morning. Neighbours, do your duty, and seize the culprit !'

On hearing the charge, the man seemed enlightened, and, saying not another word, resigned himself with preternatural civility to the search-party, who, with their staves in their hands, surrounded him on all sides, and marched him back towards the shepherd's cottage.

It was eleven o'clock by the time they arrived. The light shining from the open door, a sound of men's voices within, proclaimed to them as they approached the house that some new events had arisen in their absence. On entering they discovered the shepherd's living-room to be invaded by two officers from Casterbridge gaol, and a well-known magistrate who lived at the nearest country seat, intelligence of the escape having become generally circulated.

'Gentlemen,' said the constable, 'I have brought back your man—not without risk and danger ; but every one must do his duty. He is inside this circle of able-bodied persons, who have lent me useful aid considering their ignorance of Crown work. Men, bring forward your prisoner.' And the third stranger was led to the light.

'Who is this?' said one of the officials.

'The man,' said the constable.

'Certainly not,' said the other turnkey ; and the first corroborated his statement.

'But how can it be otherwise?' asked the constable. 'Or why was he so terrified at sight o' the singing instrument of the law?' Here he related the strange behaviour of the third stranger on entering the house.

'Can't understand it,' said the officer coolly. 'All I know is that it is not the condemned man. He's quite a different character from this one ; a gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you'd never mistake as long as you lived.'

'Why, souls—'twas the man in the chimney-corner !'

'Hey—what?' said the magistrate, coming forward after inquiring particulars from the shepherd in the background. 'Haven't you got the man after all?'

'Well, sir,' said the constable, 'he's the man we were in search of, that's true ; and yet he's not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search of was not the man we wanted, sir, if you understand my everyday way ; for 'twas the man in the chimney-corner.'

'A pretty kettle of fish altogether!' said the magistrate. 'You had better start for the other man at once.'

The prisoner now spoke for the first time. The mention of the man in the chimney-corner seemed to have moved him as nothing else could do. 'Sir,' he said, stepping forward to the magistrate, 'take no more trouble about me. The time is come when I may as well speak. I have done nothing; my crime is that the condemned man is my brother. Early this afternoon I left home at Anglebury to tramp it all the way to Casterbridge gaol to bid him farewell. I was benighted, and called here to rest and ask the way. When I opened the door I saw before me the very man, my brother, that I thought to see in the condemned cell at Casterbridge. He was in this chimney-corner; and jammed close to him, so that he could not have got out if he had tried, was the executioner who'd come to take his life, singing a song about it and not knowing that it was his victim who was close by, joining in to save appearances. My brother looked a glance of agony at me, and I knew he meant, "Don't reveal what you see; my life depends on it." I was so terror-struck that I could hardly stand, and, not knowing what I did, I turned and hurried away.'

The narrator's manner and tone had the stamp of truth, and his story made a great impression on all around. 'And do you know where your brother is at the present time?' asked the magistrate.

'I do not. I have never seen him since I closed this door.'

'I can testify to that, for we've been between ye ever since,' said the constable.

'Where does he think to fly to?—what is his occupation?'

'He's a watch-and-clock-maker, sir.'

'A said 'a was a wheelwright—a wicked rogue,' said the constable.

'The wheels o' clocks and watches he meant, no doubt,' said Shepherd Fennel. 'I thought his hands were palish for's trade.'

'Well, it appears to me that nothing can be gained by retaining this poor man in custody,' said the magistrate: 'your business lies with the other, unquestionably.'

And so the little man was released off-hand; but he looked nothing the less sad on that account, it being beyond the power of magistrate or constable to raze out the written troubles in his brain, for they concerned another whom he regarded with more solicitude than himself. When this was done, and the man had gone his way, the night was found to be so far advanced that it was deemed useless to renew the search before the next morning.

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheep-stealer became general and keen, to all appearance at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover, his marvellous coolness and daring under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and outhouses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some old overgrown trackway or other, remote from turnpike roads; but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. Thus the days and weeks passed without tidings.

In brief, the bass-voiced man of the chimney-corner was never recaptured. Some said that he went across the sea, others that he did not, but buried himself in the depths of a populous city. At any rate, the gentleman in cinder-grey never did his morning's work at Casterbridge, nor met anywhere at all, for business purposes, the comrade with whom he had passed an hour of relaxation in the lonely house on the coomb.

The grass has long been green on the graves of Shepherd Fennel and his frugal wife; the guests who made up the christening party have mainly followed their entertainers to the tomb; the baby in whose honour they all had met is a matron in the sere and yellow leaf. But the arrival of the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected therewith, is a story as well known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs.

THOMAS HARDY.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss.

'The Ballad of Chevy Chase.'—The Editor regrets that he is unable to find space for this poem. It was sent, by the author's direction, to his address at Mr. G. Adams', Maison Paul Tirantz, Rue Gamieri, Nior, France, but has been returned through the Dead Letter Office. The Editor retains the MS. until he receives further instructions.

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An Address by Dr. B. W. RICHARDSON, F.R.S., &c. &c., at the Ladies' Sanitary Association.



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SANITARY CONGRESS, Sept. 1882.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

APRIL 1883.

Thicker than Water.

BY JAMES PAYN, AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' 'HIGH SPIRITS,' &c.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN AUTOGRAPH COLLECTOR.

THE reposal of a confidence—especially when it is unsolicited—has the same effect as the conferring of an obligation; for the time, at least, it knits together both giver and receiver. It is probable that by no other means than those she had taken, though she had done so without premeditation or design, could Miss Julia Blithers have drawn Mary Marvon to herself. As it was, in her isolation and loneliness, Mary began to take no little interest in her new acquaintance. She sincerely pitied her fate, and sympathised with it. She had her own reasons, as we know, to complain of Fortune, but she acknowledged to herself that Miss Julia's case was more deplorable than her own. The superiority of her position was not indeed considerable, nor did it admit of affording the other any material assistance, but what help she had to give, in the way of advice and comfort, she gave her; and Miss Julia's gratitude can only be guessed by those who have awakened the interest of a fellow-creature for the first time.

What somewhat interfered with Mary's sympathy—and the harmony of our most generous emotions is often marred by these false notes—was the folly and affectation of its recipient. Miss Julia was a bibliomaniac, but one of a very anomalous kind. Bindings were nothing to her, and one edition was as good

as another : she loved them for their authors' sakes. So far she stood upon a pinnacle ; where she came down from it (and a very considerable way) was that she had only the faintest conception of their authors' meaning. One is not astonished at the admiration for blue china ; there is nothing in it, those who admire it have nothing in *them*, and the whole affair is in harmony. Stamp collectors are stamp collectors ; they are in the same category with those who amass walking-sticks ; their fancy, such as it is, is explicable. But fancy was the very last thing in which Miss Julia permitted herself to indulge. She was the very antithesis of the poet who wrote of himself—

Not to admire is all the art I know.

She was one long note of literary admiration.

Among her secret treasures, kept in a box under her bed, and guarded from Sister Sarah's eyes by the modest folds of a flannel petticoat, was an autograph book, in which the names of great living writers were inscribed. In some cases she had even got whole letters from them. One day she brought this to Mary Marvon's room and opened it with as much impressiveness as though it had been the original MS. of 'Hamlet.'

'If anything was to happen to this, my dear,' she said with solemnity—'fire, thieves, or the moth—I really think it would kill me.'

It was really an interesting book, and contained communications not only from persons of literary eminence, but from some who, Mary had heard, were very unwilling, in general, to gratify curiosity such as Miss Julia's.

'And are these all really genuine?' inquired Mary, involuntarily, for it had crossed her mind that, like Mr. Toots, Miss Julia might possibly have passed her leisure time—of which she had plenty—in composing letters to herself from conspicuous people, and imitating their handwritings.

'I thought you would be astonished,' returned her companion, triumphantly, and not in the least disturbed by what might certainly have seemed a somewhat injurious suggestion. 'Genuine? yes, every one of them.'

'And all addressed to you?'

'Lor bless me! no, not one of them.'

She turned to the other end of the book, where there was a fine collection of envelopes with different directions : 'Miss Graves, The Grange, Land's End ;' 'Mr. Winlass, shipmaster, Newcastle,'

&c. &c. 'These are the people—that is, their addresses—to whom they were written.'

'But how on earth did you get possession of them?'

'Ha, ha! yes, yes!'

The cunning and exultation exhibited on Miss Julia's ordinarily stolid countenance were amazing to witness, and also a little alarming. It seemed just possible to poor Mary that her companion's mania might not be only for autographs, but might have a wider range.

'How did I get 'em? That's *my* secret, my dear Miss Marvon. If you'll show me that funny desk of yours'—and she pointed to the type-writer—'then I'll tell you how I got these letters.'

The mixture of earnestness and simplicity in her manner was remarkable. Her desire for barter reminded one of that early example of trading in our nursery annals, 'If you will give me a bite of your apple I will show you my chilblain.'

'It is not a desk, it is a printing machine,' said Mary, smiling, 'and I will show it you (provided you promise not to speak of it to others), without fee, emolument, or reward.'

Then she unlocked it, and, sitting down at the keyboard, dashed off pretty rapidly this specimen of typography: 'How did you maneag' (meaning 'manage') 'to got those autographs?'

'Why, it's printed!' exclaimed Miss Julia, in an ecstasy. 'Dear heart, if I could only get my poems done that way!'

The passionate sincerity of the aspiration was almost too much for Mary's gravity. At first she imagined that Miss Julia wished that her poetical effusions could be turned out mechanically, and thereby save her spiritual nature from the wear and tear of conception—prevent the sword from wearing out the scabbard. The next words of her companion fortunately undeceived her, and prevented her from committing herself to what might have proved an unpardonable error.

'You see my great difficulty, dear Miss Marvon, has hitherto been the getting into print. Nobody does justice to their own productions when reading them aloud. "The chariot wheels," as the poet tells us, "jar and grate when we attempt to drive them forth."'

'That is not quite the correct quotation,' said Mary, gently; 'the line I think runs thus: "The chariot wheels jar in the gate through which we drive them forth."'

'Just so. What a memory you have! I thought it was "jar and grate"; the idea is much the same, but it is better to have

it quite correct. Well, I don't like to spoil my poems by reading them aloud, while my handwriting—at least so say the few people to whom I have ever shown my MSS.—is very difficult to read. Now if it could be printed off like this there would be no excuse for them.'

There was a moment of hesitation with Mary. She was disinclined to increase the sum of human misery by making Miss Julia's poems legible to her friends; on the other hand, Miss Julia's yearning look was almost irresistible.

'I have no objection to lend you my machine, and in time you will learn to print for yourself,' said Mary.

'I learn? Never!' exclaimed Miss Julia, confidently. 'I have never learnt anything in my life. What I can do—such as poetry, and, indeed, that's the only thing I can do—comes by nature. Oh, if I could but just see two or three lines of my very own in print!' She clasped her hands ecstatically, and cast her eyes to the ceiling, as though she would have added had she dared, 'I could then die happy.'

'Well, I have my own work to do, which takes up a great deal of time, but if it's only two or three lines,' said Mary, good-naturedly——

'Only two lines, just two, a couplet,' interrupted Miss Julia, eagerly. 'I thought of them last night just after I got into bed, and kept repeating them to myself for fear I should forget them, till Sarah called out snappishly, "Don't mutter," and drove them out of my head. It was just like what happened to poor Coleridge when the tax-gatherer called, you know, and spoilt his dream of Kubbledy Khan.'

'Kubla Khan, was it not?' suggested Mary.

'Very likely. What a memory you have!

Could I revive within me
That sympathetic song, etc.

Thank goodness, I can revive it. It all came again to me this morning. I had a dream of the sea. A tremendous storm was lashing it, as I have seen it do at Margate, when it wetted Sarah and me quite through on the jetty. "The league-long boilers," as Tennyson calls them, were breaking on the beach.'

'“Rollers,” I think, is Tennyson's word,' smiled Mary.

'Perhaps—what a memory you have! But they do boil as well as roll, so that don't matter. Then there came a calm, and the

contrast was most impressive. I wrote more than fifty lines about it.'

'But the couplet,' said Mary, with her fingers on the keyboard.

'Just so: I can't expect more than that, else it seems a pity to mutilate the poem. Yes, I think these lines are as good as any. "The giant waves"—have you got that?

And the giant waves, in their infant play;

—I think the anti-what-do-you-call-it, "giant and infant," you know, rather striking.'

'Is all that in the couplet?'

'No, no, I merely wished to point out the anti——'

'The antithesis.'

'Just so—what a memory! It's the very last couplet of all, and gives a sort of dying farewell to the watery scene.

And the giant waves, in their infant play,
Flashed like the flowerets of yesterday.'

Miss Julia was as obviously waiting for commendation as a dog sitting on his hind legs is begging for a bone. But Mary could not give it: the most she could hope to do in the way of favourable criticism was to restrain her mirth.

'It looks very well in print, does it not?' inquired the poetess. 'I had no idea it was so good when I wrote it out.'

'I am so glad you like it,' said Mary.

'Like it! I never was so delighted in my life. The "giant waves"—one seems to see them rolling in, or perhaps going out. Yes, they are going out. I really don't see anything to laugh at, Miss Marvon,' she added, with severity. 'There is surely nothing ludicrous in a picture of nature in repose after a fit of stormful passion.'

'It is not that, Miss Julia,' murmured Mary, with the tears running down her cheeks. 'Pray forgive me—I was afraid I had spelt flowerets with two ts.'

She had really no apprehension of that nature; but if ever a tarradiddle was excusable, this slight departure from the main line of truth must surely be held to be so, since it avoided what must otherwise have been a most disastrous collision.

'I was also thinking,' added Mary, 'that you are very cleverly getting out of telling me how you got those autographs.'

'Oh no, I have not forgotten my promise,' answered Miss Julia, at once forgetting her mortification in this evidence of her companion's interest in her affairs, one thought expelling another in the narrow smoothbore of her mind, like pellets in a popgun.

'Now here's Miss Graves, Land's End, for instance. Well, you wouldn't think it, but that's me.'

'But how can you be Miss Graves?'

'I assume the character: no one is hurt by it, because there is no such person: she is the offspring of my imagination. I select the Land's End for her residence as being an out-of-the-way place, and the least likely for any one to visit, and I write in her name to some great philosopher or poet, thus:—

"Dear Sir,—I take up my pen at the instance of a grey-haired and widowed mother, who finds in your immortal works the best solace for the troubles of a lifetime; she has heard that you are about to honour the neighbourhood by your presence——"

'But, my dear Miss Julia.'

'Just so, you are going to say that that was not true, but I am not so sure about that. Granting my premisses—starting, that is, upon the supposition that I have a widowed and grey-haired mother, how can you lay it down that she has not heard that the philosopher in question is not coming into her neighbourhood? The whole affair is in the regions of the imagination. Well, she writes (that is, *I* write): "If you are coming, it is my dearest mother's most earnest wish that you should make our little house your home during your visit." I add something about fresh eggs and the mild air of the Atlantic, to give the thing a local colouring, and the trap is laid. In nine cases out of ten it catches them.'

'What! do you write to more than one?'

'Certainly, I send the hospitable invitation to half a dozen, like a circular. Some of them are rude, or perhaps suspect something, and they don't reply; but others do. Here is one. "Upon this earth-planet of ours, hospitality (dearest to those under another's roof-tree) is perennial, an eternal verity," &c. &c. You know who that was.'

'But how audacious!' exclaimed Mary, aghast at the other's complacent satisfaction at her success. 'Suppose he had come?'

'My dear Miss Marvon, he couldn't. There was nowhere for him to come to except the post office. Replies were forwarded to my address at Bath. Perhaps my prettiest touch was the epistle from the shipmaster at Newcastle, Mr. Winlass. It was addressed to two great poets to whom I had written per-

haps fifty times before without obtaining a syllable of reply. One of them, whom I had likened in one of my previous communications to a golden eagle, had written back to me through some secretary that if he was an eagle he was an old one, and not to be caught with chaff; he didn't even sign the letter. But Mr. Winlass of Newcastle caught them both with this bait:—

“Dear Sir,—I know little of books in a general way; I have had no time for studying them, my whole life having been passed upon the stormy deep, where for months I have had no volume in my hand save yours. My voyages were successful, and in time I became a shipmaster, with a certain share in each venture. Unhappily, in my old age misfortunes have crowded upon me. My last chance is settled in a vessel about to be launched upon the Clyde. If I could obtain permission from you to call it by your name it would give me heart and hope. May I?” Well, one wrote back a little curtly (but still he signed it), “Yes, you may.” The other—but you can read it for yourself.

Mary turned to the page indicated by her companion. It was quite a long letter, a royal communication from the king of bards.

‘Dear Sir,—You are very welcome to what you ask of me. I hope that the good ship’—here followed his own name—‘may have a more prosperous voyage than its godfather can boast of having met with on the sea of life. What you say of my works is very gratifying. But you use the word volume: my poems are in forty volumes. The edition I always recommend is that with my portrait, edited by Cutter. Get it. If it is your intention to furnish the vessel with a figure-head, my statue by Carver, R. A., or the little bust by Chisella (of Florence) in this year’s exhibition, will supply all that can be supplied by marble. I shall look into the shipping intelligence for the next few days with interest.’

‘I think that very neat and characteristic,’ observed Miss Julia, complacently, as she restored her precious book to its casket, the flannel petticoat. They say he has not sent any one his autograph for twenty years.—That’s Sarah’s knock at the door, I know, so I must say good-bye.’

CHAPTER XXIV.

ONE FROM THE SHOULDER.

As time went on, Mary, whose fingers were as apt as her observation was keen, became an adept at her new calling. She performed surprising feats with her type-writer. For one thing, she challenged Miss Julia to a trial of speed; the latter with pen and ink to copy a paragraph of a newspaper against her, wherein print beat writing as easily as paper beats papyrus. Miss Julia toiled after in vain, with this manifest disadvantage added, that, whereas what was printed at this high pressure was clear and without mistake, *her manuscript* was illegible. Mr. Rennie complimented Mary on her work the next day in a letter which enclosed the reward of her labours, and sent her a fresh batch of pleadings—grist for the mill.

To Miss Julia, who had almost perforce been made her confidante, Mary Marvon's contentment with these small mercies seemed marvellous enough; but the truth is, the discovery that we are able to support ourselves, no matter how humbly, independent of outside assistance, is to the independent spirit a most solid grain of satisfaction. If we cannot do that (supposing there is need for us to do it), we are at the mercy of fortune indeed, and all the philosophy in the world can no more comfort us under the deficiency than supply it. It was fortunate that Mary had this consolation, for she felt her isolated condition—to which she could scarcely make up her mind whether Miss Julia was a relief or not—more than ever. She never now beheld the face of a friend. Charley could not trust himself to come, or thought his visits might be misconstrued, or that Mary would resent his calling again so soon. Mr. Rennie confined himself to epistolary communication, and Mrs. Sotheran did not even write. There was good reason enough for this, but Mary did not know it: she had the uncharity (born of bitterness) to imagine that her last letter had angered her old friend, and produced a breach between them. Truly has it been written that the destruction of the poor is their poverty; and when we feel forsaken and out of heart our behaviour unwittingly tends to estrange us from the hand of friendship.

Still, in its pleasureless mechanical way, the wheel of life was turning smoothly enough for Mary when there suddenly came a 'kink' in it. It was a small thing, but when we are in a small way, small things that go against us are catastrophes. In looking

through one of her pleadings, which she was wont to do before starting with her machine, it struck Mary that she had copied it before. The sense of the matter was of course too wrapped up in repetitions and technicalities to be intelligible to her, but the names of the parties to the suit were the same, and she felt convinced it was the same suit. Mr. Rennie had told her that only one copy of the pleadings would be required. It was natural therefore to conclude that there was some mistake. But was there a mistake? was the question that disturbed poor Mary, and brought the hot blood into her cheeks. Her suspicions would not, perhaps, have been aroused but for Charley's well-meant but transparent device for supplying her with bogus material; but it now struck her that Mr. Rennie might have no more work for her at present—she had done a great deal for him in a very short time—but was sending her these pleadings, or some of them, out of mere charity, to keep her employed. It is one of the many disadvantages of a sensitive nature combined with a keen intelligence that it rarely experiences the bliss of ignorance; it cannot take good fortune for granted, but must needs be inquisitive and solicitous as to whence it comes. It has a tendency to jump at once to the most unpleasant conclusions. Yes; Mr. Rennie, out of a mistaken kindness, was treating her as a child—nay, worse, was offering her a dole under pretence of wages!

One feels how insignificant such a mere detail must appear to many who read it—fine ladies who loll in their arm-chairs and 'take up a book' during some bad quarter of an hour, ere the carriage comes to take them to the Park, or the opera. How unreasonable, too, it must needs seem to others who receive Fortune's favours without a scruple as to the deserving of them! But to poor Mary it brought the heartache. Her little dream of independence—no gorgeous vision at the best—vanished at once, and gave place to that terrible desire to know the worst which seizes on those who are but too often the least qualified to bear that knowledge. To write to Mr. Rennie on such a subject was, however, most painful to her. She resolved to go out at once and make inquiries as to the supply of materials for her calling, where a true love of independence (as she bitterly reflected) should have led her at first, namely, to the open market. She would apply to some law stationer for the employment she required, and put herself, if possible, out of the reach of such unwelcome favours for the future.

It was getting late, tea had already been served in the common

parlour; but such shops she thought would still be open, and she felt that she could never sleep with such an uncertainty on her mind. Placing a specimen of her work in her pocket, she rapidly put on her bonnet and mantle and descended the stairs, and, meeting no one on her way, let herself out at the front door. In her haste she had forgotten her veil, but the omission did not trouble her: there are some girls in such sad positions that they even forget that they have pretty faces, and also so innocent that they are unaware of the peril to which they expose them.

Since she had been at the boarding-house she had only been twice out of doors before, each time in company with Mrs. Tidman and at her especial invitation. As a rule, it is only the light-hearted that seek the sunshine and fresh air—those who are out of heart, unlike the warrior of old, prefer rather to ‘hear the mouse squeak than the lark sing.’ Not that there were larks of any kind to be found in the neighbourhood of Tidman’s, even had Mary had a fancy for them. The streets for miles round were of the same pattern—dull, decorous, depressing, with here and there a waste piece of ground which should have been garden. It was only suburban in its inconvenience—its distance from any genuine articles of food; for any hint of the country it might have been in Cheapside. The calm of the summer evening made itself felt, however, even there. Mary felt its refreshing influence as she walked on. Her goal was but a couple of streets away, a shop she had noticed with ‘Bernard, law stationer,’ over the door, and she soon reached it. The proprietor, after the toils of the day, was enjoying a short pipe in the doorway without his coat. He was a little man, with eyes and hair like a ferret, but without its keenness of expression; he had a dazed and subjugated look, as of a ferret who had been kept in a bag much too long. The appearance and attire of his visitor, which in more civilised regions would have passed unobserved, or have been pronounced faultless, seemed to impress him very much. As he stepped round behind his counter to attend to her wants, he cast a wistful glance towards the back shop, as though he would have liked to call some one to come and have a look at her, but was at a loss for a pretext.

‘I want some copying to do, if you please,’ said Mary, coming straight to the point. ‘This is a specimen of my work in that way.’

‘Dear me! Ahem!’ said the man, the cup of whose amazement seemed to have run over at this request. ‘Matilda!’

The glass door at the back of the shop here opened, and a woman, tall for her sex, but, as compared to her husband, a giantess, came forward with a child in her arms.

‘The young lady wants some copying to do,’ observed the little man deferentially.

‘What sort of copying?’ inquired the tall woman, regarding the applicant with great severity and even suspicion.

‘Pleadings,’ explained Mary; ‘that is what they are called, I believe,’ she added modestly. She addressed herself naturally to the male as the person likely to be best informed upon the matter, but it was the lady who replied to her. ‘Pleadings? Certainly not. We have nothing of that kind here.’

The woman’s manner was so disagreeable that Mary shrank from her. She was not afraid of her in the least, but perceiving that her intention, however inexplicable, was to be offensive, she ignored her.

‘Perhaps,’ she continued, still addressing herself to the shop-keeper, ‘you could recommend me——’

She ought to have said ‘refer’ me, but to her annoyance and agitation she used the first word that occurred to her—‘to some other stationer.’

‘No,’ said the tall woman, with greater severity than ever; ‘we never give recommendations to parties when parties are unknown to us.’

Mary turned on her heel and left the shop. It was her first experience of the relations between employers and employed from the latter’s standpoint, and it did not impress her with the dignity of labour. Why should this dreadful woman have spoken to her in that insolent manner, while her husband, on the other hand, would not speak to her at all? Was it possible that there was anything unusual or disgraceful in applying for work as she had done? Full of humiliating thoughts, she was walking rapidly home when she heard hurrying footsteps behind her. It was the little shopkeeper, still in his shirt-sleeves, but with a slip of paper in his hand instead of his pipe.

‘The best establishment is that,’ he gasped, pressing the paper into her hand. ‘It will be open for the next two hours. Don’t you mind my Matilda: she’s an excellent creature, only she *will* believe that every young woman who enters the shop is coming after *me*.’

Before Mary could reply he had vanished, the thought that his Matilda might be on his track no doubt lending him wings.

His behaviour was ridiculous enough ; but it was clear to Mary that he had exposed himself to no slight peril for her sake ; for who, to such a man, is a more formidable source of fear than such a wife ?

The paper in her hand bore the address of a stationer in the Strand. The distance was considerable, and it was nearly seven o'clock. Prudence would have advised her going home ; she had certainly had enough and to spare of adventure for that night. But poor Mary was not quite herself ; her doubts about those pleadings were importunate, and even her late rude experience tended to upset her usual sober judgment, and put her in an excited and abnormal state. She feared that a certain sinking of her heart, which had already begun to oppress her, would overwhelm her utterly if she went home and let it have way. As she hesitated, she was hailed by a passing omnibus bound for the Strand, and she got into it. There were few passengers, but to her fancy they took more notice of her than was pleasant. She had not been accustomed to that mode of conveyance, or to the class who use it, and did not understand that folks can lean upon their sticks, or suck the handles of their umbrellas, and stare at you like mesmerists, without in reality being aware of your existence. The journey with its delays seemed interminable, and long before she reached its termination, Charing Cross, she regretted having undertaken it. Having got so far, however, it seemed folly to return without accomplishing her object. She walked hastily down the Strand, fuller at that hour, perhaps, than at any other, till she came to the street she was in search of. It was unknown to her, and she stopped for an instant to read its name, when a voice murmured close to her ear, ' Can I help you in any way ? '

A gentleman of middle age, wearing a light overcoat above his evening dress, had addressed her. There was nothing offensive in his looks or manner, yet the girl shrank from him involuntarily. There seemed to be something of mock civility in his tone.

' No, sir, I thank you,' she answered curtly, and hurried up the street. To her great mortification, on reaching the shop which had been indicated to her, she found it closed. It was really no great matter, but to her mind's eye at present, as happens to those new to trouble, each disappointment was magnified into a misfortune. With a sigh and a weary air she was about to retrace her steps when they were once more arrested by the same person.

'I am sure you are in some difficulty,' he said : 'pray let me help you.'

Her heart beat fast, and even on that crowded pavement she felt a sense of fear. Although she had no experience of such matters, nor had even read of them, she was conscious that she was being subjected to insult. Her cheeks burnt as with a living flame as she brushed by him (for he had placed himself in her way) and walked on as quickly as she could without reply. It is the fashion among the smugly prosperous to affirm that if young ladies meet with annoyance when they walk abroad they have in some degree, at all events, themselves to thank for it. In this matter, Smug Prosperity—always on wheels, and above the reach of such annoyance—may sometimes err through ignorance, but more often is a wilful liar. Not content with their own immunity from such perils, it is the habit with many of the class significantly described as 'carriage people' to deny its existence as regards their poorer sisters, or when they hear of its occurrence even to scornfully lift their eyebrows ; but as a matter of fact poverty has no more cruel sting than the necessity it imposes upon youth and beauty to walk in London unprotected.

The path of the poor is set with snares ;
What are joys to the rich to them are cares ;

and the very loveliness which fills the mother's heart with pride in the one case, fills it with fear in the other.

As Mary Marvon turned into the Strand again she had to cross the box entrance of a theatre, where for a moment or two she was delayed by the usual crowd : a gentleman on the pavement was offering his arm to a lady magnificently dressed who was getting out of her carriage. It was Mrs. Beckett escorted by Mr. Ralph Dornay. For an instant Mary was in doubt whether she should not address her and claim her protection. That such a thought should have entered into her mind showed how great was her alarm and perturbation ; something told her that hateful man was still pursuing her.

Like one upon a lonely moor
Who dares not turn his head
Because he knows some loathsome thing
Doth close behind him tread,

she was somehow aware of his presence ; her pride, however, sustained her ; she suffered Mrs. Beckett and her companion to pass in without recognition, and hurried on. She was again

delayed, though for a shorter time, at the pit entrance, and as she stood there the same cold insolent voice whispered in her ear: 'I am sure we are not strangers; I am certain I have seen that pretty face before.' Her limbs trembled beneath her with indignation and fear, but she answered him nothing; then suddenly with passionate eagerness she exclaimed, 'Charley! Charley!'

Charles Sotheran was passing into the theatre within a yard of her. He turned round quickly, and she seized his arm: 'Some man is annoying me,' she whispered. Charley's eyes flashed round upon the crowd behind her. 'Pray make no disturbance,' she pleaded; 'but see me into a cab.'

He led her without a word into the next street—a quiet one for that neighbourhood—where there was a cabstand.

As he opened the door for her, she noticed in spite of her agitation how deadly pale he was. In his heart he had already committed a murder upon 'some person unknown.' He was about to give her address to the cabman when the man in the light overcoat lounged up. His object—as, unfortunately for him, Charley guessed—was to hear where Mary was going. It was an audacious thing to do, but it is a popular error which asserts that scoundrels are always cowards. This one, at all events, was not, though of course he did not know that Charley belonged to an athletic club, where he was champion of the light-weights. The latter had now no doubt about his enemy, for he read the recognition of him in Mary's frightened face. He knew that for her sake there must be no disturbance, no explanation, no row of any kind; and he took his precautions accordingly. He gave an address about three miles from her real one, and close at hand.

'I will give you a sovereign,' said Charley to the cabman with great distinctness; 'if you will drive to Tottenham Court Road, and get us there within five minutes.'

Then he turned. It did not take more than a second—and in the next the cab was rattling them up the street at the rate of ten miles an hour—but in that second he did his work with great completeness. It was really a splendid combination of accuracy and despatch.

A dissolving view of a light overcoat on the pavement with a man inside it without a hat was all that Mary saw of it.

'Oh, Charley, what have you done?' she cried, not in any positive reprobation, it must be confessed, but with a certain alarm and horror at having been even the virtuous Helen of so dire a combat. 'I really believe you knocked the man down.'

'I have an impression to that effect myself,' said Charley, without moving a muscle.

'But don't you think you may have hurt him?'

'Certainly not. A man of that kind is used, I should imagine, to be knocked down.'

'Oh, Charley! how can I thank you enough?' said Mary, not in allusion of course to that particular service, of which she could hardly be supposed to approve, but to his having come to her assistance in so sharp a strait.

'There is nothing to thank me for,' he answered simply. 'The obligation is on the other side. I enjoyed the thing very much, but I should like to have had a quarter of an hour with that gentleman all alone. I am sincerely obliged to you, however, for the opportunity so far as it went. But how on earth came you in such company, Mary?'

Then she told him, not without an involuntary tear or two, the adventures of the evening. He looked very grave and grim.

'You think I am a foolish girl, quite unfit to take care of myself, or to fight the battle of life,' observed she, pitifully. 'But you see I am so new to it.'

Their positions had suddenly been reversed by this shock of experience: Telemachus had become Mentor.

'You must promise me,' he said, 'that what has happened will be a lesson to you, and that you will never go out on any such expedition alone again.'

'I will—I do,' she replied, with a shudder of reminiscence.

When they came to the Tottenham Court Road Charley stopped the vehicle. 'We will get out here,' he said, 'and take another cab.'

He thought it prudent, in case the gentleman in the light coat had been dropped too heavily, that the cabman should not be able to trace them. That personage pocketed his sovereign with almost as much admiration as satisfaction. 'I never saw a man hit out from the shoulder more neatly,' he observed at parting; a compliment which was accepted in the spirit in which it was given.

As they neared their destination Charley again stopped the cab. 'I will leave you now, Mary, but you must let me come and look after you occasionally.'

Of course she could not refuse him—her heart was too full of gratitude to him for that; not only for what he had done, but for what he had omitted to do. It had been very thoughtful of him

—it was no vanity on her part to add ‘and very unselfish’—that he had declined to see her home where his companionship must needs have aroused curiosity, if not comment; and she felt too despondent, nay, too crushed and humiliated, to bear up in her old defiant manner against the shafts even of petty malice.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE WAGES OF TOIL.

WHAT Mary Marvon had undergone in her first ‘struggle for existence’ was ‘a lesson’ to her in a far wider sense than that in which Charley had used the word. She had not been so simple as to imagine that skill and diligence are necessarily passports to success, even of the humblest kind; but she now learnt, ‘by harsh evidence,’ that there are obstacles to a woman’s earning her own livelihood which may well dishearten the bravest. It is not good, we are told, for man to live alone; but it is not only not good, but exceedingly difficult, for woman to do so. If Mary had had a sister, or even a friend of her own sex, matters would not have gone so hard with her. If her mind had not been so monopolised by her own troubles, and she could have given it, as of old, to abstract questions, she would have understood now why the young and friendless of her own sex so often make such sad mistakes (as she used charitably to call them) as to matrimony,—it is necessity and not choice which compels them; they take the first hand that offers protection and support, because they cannot procure them for themselves.

Mary Marvon, however, was the last person to sit down with folded hands and bemoan her fate, while anything remained to be done in the way of remedy. After all, as she said to herself the next morning, when, if not joy, at least renewed hope comes to most of us, she was no worse off, as regarded the possibilities of maintenance, than she had been yesterday, though she had had some unpleasant experiences in her first effort to procure it. She resolved once more to call at the law stationer’s near the Strand; only even in broad daylight—so seriously had her nerves been discomposed—she felt unequal to do so alone. She was therefore compelled to seek the companionship of Miss Julia, and, so far as the object of her visit was concerned, to take that lady into her

confidence. She consented at once; nor did the confession of Mary's necessities seem in the least degree to prejudice her against her new friend. On the contrary, she expressed a very lively sympathy and compassion; misquoted with tears various couplets illustrative of her situation, and secretly made up her mind to compose a poem on the subject herself (to be called 'The Orphan Toiler') which should throw all her previous productions into the shade. The unwonted excitement of this affair indeed, and her temporary freedom from Sister Sarah, raised Miss Julia's poetical feelings to a higher pitch than ever; she more than once broke out into quotations in the omnibus, which, being delivered as usual with appropriate tone and gesture, made a considerable sensation among the passengers, and even caused the conductor to make a communication through his hollowed hand to the driver over their heads, to the effect that there was 'a party inside who knowed how to patter like Tommy Tompkins,'—some rival improvisatore, as it would seem, in omnibus circles. Even when they got out at Charing Cross, Miss Julia was far from desisting from her cuckoo notes, and, the season being midsummer, was naturally reminded of Rogers' description of spring in town.

'I need scarcely remind one endowed with your marvellous powers of memory, my dear Miss Marvon, of that exquisite line suggested to my recollection by this neighbourhood—

When April verdure blooms in Golden Square.'

Under other circumstances the notion of Golden Square as a bower, and the 'furred beauty' coming to winter there, would have amused Mary very much, but what the present neighbourhood suggested to her recollection was of a much more personal and painful kind. She almost expected to see blood on the pavement before the stationer's door, and a knot of people earnestly discussing the details of the catastrophe of the previous evening. Nothing, however, could be more commonplace and everyday than the surroundings of the establishment: Mary walked in, and made her application to the shopkeeper, while Miss Julia, with a delicacy that did her honour, waited outside.

'You have a type-writing machine of your own, I suppose, miss?' he replied, regarding a specimen of her handiwork through his spectacles with some curiosity. 'Well, that will take the bread out of the mouth of a good many people in time, no doubt; but it's a precious dear article, as I understand, and it must take a person a longish time to work at it before he sees his money back.'

'I don't mind work,' said Mary, modestly, 'and I find I can do more and more copy every day with less and less exertion.'

'Um—ah, yes, it's fairly done enough, and beats our people's handiwork out and out,' confessed the shopkeeper. 'You shall have your share of the next batch of pleadings we have sent in. You have references, of course?'

Mary uttered a cheerful assent; she felt so grateful to this man for doing what it was his interest to do.

'We can only pay you, of course, at the usual rate,' he added, with a glance at her neat dress: 'ours is not a line that requires fancy work, or affords fancy prices. But you are not a novice, and know what to expect, no doubt.'

'I suppose it will be the same,' said Mary, hesitatingly, 'as Mr.—that is, as the lawyer who employs me, has hitherto paid me—sixpence a folio?'

'Sixpence—sixpence a folio!' exclaimed the man in amazement. 'You must have chanced upon a very rich lawyer, and, what is almost as rare, a lawyer who does not mind spending his money. Why, that's twopence a folio more than he gets from his own clients.'

'Are you sure of that—quite sure?' inquired Mary. 'It is very sad news to me.'

The old shopkeeper seemed touched by her dejected look and despondent tone.

'Well, of course I'm sure, young lady, since I've been in the trade this quarter of a century. What the lawyers pay us is but threepence; and then he gets a penny profit. If we gave threepence, therefore, what would there be for us to live upon? No, no, it is clear to me you've got a friend in court, and I recommend you to stick to him.'

'But if what you say is true,' sighed Mary from a heavy heart, 'one half of what I am paid is mere charity.'

'Tut—tut,' returned the other good-naturedly, 'let him pay it. It's like enough you're an orphan. Just so; well, do you suppose he hasn't had his whack out of orphans? If he has a freak to put down something in his ledger to their credit, don't balk him. Avoid the open market where the stock is low, and stick to your preference share while it lasts. That's my advice.'

The notion that Mr. Rennie had selected her as an exceptional orphan to be nourished (at 6d. the folio) instead of being ruined in the usual way by law expenses, though to a certain degree gratifying to her *amour propre*, was by no means satisfactory to poor Mary.

At the most, if the old stationer was to be believed, she could hope to go only a very little way towards restoring the average; but, truth to say, the idea of putting her employer at ease with his conscience was very little consolation to her. Upon the whole, though she gave him credit for good intentions, she was very far from pleased with Mr. Rennie's conduct, the reason of which was only too plain to her. He had evidently treated her from the very first as a mere child, to be humoured and not thwarted; and, feeling sure that she would soon come to her senses and apply to her friends for the assistance which pique or temper disinclined her to ask for, he had for the present, under the pretence of helping her to help herself, paid her a fancy price for her services. She no longer doubted that he had even given her work to do twice over merely to keep her employed—a cruel kindness indeed. Yet was the operation of having her eyes opened less cruel? It was now certain that threepence a folio was as much as she could expect for her work even if she got it at first-hand (and how, except in Mr. Rennie's case, could she get it at first-hand?), a very scanty wage indeed, which brought down her expectations for the future fifty per cent. Nor was it to be hoped for that increased skillfulness, or diligence, could much improve her prospects. The possession of the type-writer, as the stationer had informed her, placed her in the front rank of her humble calling; and it was anything but a consolation to her to learn, that poorly as she might be remunerated, the bread she did get would be 'taken out of the mouths' of others.

Mary left her name and address with the shopkeeper, for, however low the wages of toil might be, they were preferable to those of charity, and he willingly enough undertook to send her work. She was still resolutely, almost doggedly, resolved to gain her own living, but the elasticity of mind with which she had commenced the attempt was gone. There is no doubt a very genuine nobility about independence; but it is Nature's nobility, not Debre'tt's, and the process of gaining it is often not only rough and difficult but humiliating; in the more humble walks of life it is no more to be attained without this drawback than the glorious arts of Healing, or of Tendance, are to be practised without the terrors of the dissecting room or the horrors of the hospital ward.

The one item of congratulation for poor Mary in the whole affair was that Miss Julia was not a witness to her disappointment. He must be a friend indeed in whose presence we can endure mortification without feeling it an aggravation of our woes.

Nor, when Mary rejoined her, did her companion, though she noticed her depression, importune her with questions. Garrulous by nature, Miss Julia was accustomed to put a bridle on her tongue in the awful presence of Sister Sarah; and she had sense enough to perceive that Mary was in no mood for talk, and respectfully abstained from it. She was careful to run no risk of offending the only friend she had ever made, and for whom she entertained an attachment as sincere and subservient as that of a dog for its master.

With the exception of a verse or two culled from the poets, and cast upon some inappropriate topic, like a garland on a hat-peg, Miss Julia indeed maintained an almost unbroken silence until they reached home, when something at Mr. Tidman's door compelled from her an ejaculation of admiration.

'Oh, Miss Marvon, did you ever?—a carriage and pair with a coachman in a white wig. It must be Mrs. Tidman's uncle's equipage come to take her for a drive in the park.'

'Very likely,' said Mary, with indifference. Until lately such spectacles had not been portents to her, and as to Mrs. Tidman, it was only too probable, under the changed conditions of the 'copy' market, that she would now have to seek a home with some less aristocratic landlady.

'Lor, Jane, who is it?' inquired Miss Julia, eagerly, of the maid who admitted them.

'It's a lady to see *you*, miss,' returned the girl, addressing herself with respectful awe to Mary: 'the name I can't remember if it was ever so, but she's been here an hour or more.'

'They've found you at last, Miss Marvon,' exclaimed Miss Julia, dramatically. 'Something always told me that you were not what you seemed. You are the long-lost child of somebody or another, you may depend upon it.'

Ridiculous as it was, poor Mary felt her colour rise at this malapropos observation.

'There must certainly be some mistake,' she murmured.

'No, miss, I heard the lady ask for you with my own ears,' gasped the impressionable Jane. 'The footman asked me first, but I felt all of a muddle like; the horses were going "champ, champ," as though they were eating through their bits, and throwing the foam about like milk out of a churn, and I do believe as I answered "butter" or something, when the lady beckoned me to the carriage window and spoke to me with her own lips. I don't know what she was like except that she was grey and upright, but

I am sure she was a real lady, because she was covered with lace and spoke so gentle. "Does Miss Marvon live here?" she says. "Yes, my lady," says I, "leastways, she's gone into the town with Miss Julia Blithers this morning."

'There was no need to mention me, Jane,' interpolated Miss Julia, modestly. 'People of quality like to be answered "yes" or "no."'

'Well, I think this lady was different, for she asked whether you were a friend of Miss Marvon, and when I said "yes" she looked pleased. Then when I said I didn't know when you might be back, she said that was no matter, for she would come in and wait. And there she has been in the drawing-room ever since, all alone, except that everybody in the house, I do believe, has had a look at her through the keyhole.'

Of all this Mary caught only the general sense, that some strange lady whose business was urgent had called upon her. Her face was very pale and set. The conviction had flashed upon her that this was one of her father's relations—the very one, perhaps, that had hitherto supplied the funds for her maintenance, and who, having been informed of her position by Mrs. Sotheran, had now visited her for the first time to propose some arrangement for her future. For such an offer, it might well be thought, no hour could be more propitious than the present, in which Mary had just discovered for herself how rough is the road of life to those who have to travel by it without journey money, or friends to cheer their way; but though she had discovered this, she had not experienced it. There is an immense difference between expediency and necessity; and though the former affects common natures, it is only under the stern compulsion of the latter—if at all—that the finer sort can be induced to swallow their pride, which to their eyes wears only the modest hues of self-respect. Never did Mary feel less disposed for conciliation and submission than when she entered the presence of this unknown visitor, the knowledge of whose wealth and station filled her with a sort of antagonism, if not resentment, which to any other creature beneath that roof would have not only been unintelligible but seemed sheer midsummer madness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A NEW POSITION

A TALL, venerable-looking woman, with a grave and noble air, but with a certain trembling in her limbs that betokened either weakness or emotion, rose as Mary entered, and came forward with outstretched hands to greet her. The gentleness in her face, heightened rather than detracted from by the dignity of her mien, was indescribable.

‘You know who I am, I suppose, my dear?’ she said kindly.

‘No, madam, I do not.’

It was a brusque reply, but it was not brusquely uttered. While feeling indignant that it should be taken for granted that she was aware of the identity of her unwelcome patroness, the sweetness of the other’s manner, her age, her gentle looks, forbade any show of resentment.

Her visitor answered nothing, but produced her card-case, and perhaps from failing sight turned from Mary to the bow window, where with the slowness of old age she proceeded to select a card. Then Mary noticed how in that delicate face were written the autographs of care or sorrow, and how time had dealt lightly with her and fortune showered her gifts on her in vain because of them.

The very cause of this, as she well understood, might be a reason for her holding herself aloof from her visitor: the woe that this woman had suffered might be the loss of the very son who had ruined Mary’s mother in name and fame, but she could not refuse her a woman’s pity.

‘That is my name,’ said the old lady after a long pause, and she put the card in Mary’s hand. ‘Mrs. Beryl Peyton.’

‘Mrs. Peyton!’ cried Mary, with an ejaculation partly of relief at finding all her suspicions groundless, and partly of genuine pleasure. ‘I have often heard of you from Mrs. Sotheran.’

‘And that is how I heard of you, my dear,’ was the quiet reply.

‘Oh yes, I recollect now,’ said Mary, with a faint flush. ‘You are acquainted with Mrs. Beckett, and she spoke of me to you—at least, so Charley said.’

‘Yes, she spoke of you to me,’ said the old lady, in an indifferent tone, that contrasted strangely with a certain intent and lingering look with which it was accompanied, ‘and did so in the highest terms.’

‘I ought to say, I suppose, that I am obliged to her,’ said Mary, coldly: ‘at all events it was generous of her, as we did not part very good friends.’

‘Indeed! Well, she did not go into that, but I gathered from her that you had left her a little unexpectedly—and it has struck me that you might not have since succeeded in obtaining a situation quite to your mind, but be still in search of one.’

Mary bowed assent. It was impossible for her to anticipate in speech any offer from her companion, who on her part showed no sign of relieving her from her embarrassment; indeed, she looked not only at a loss for words, but even for breath; her expression was earnest but perplexed, and though her lips moved it was some moments before any sound broke from them. Even then her voice was very faint and low, and came in snatches, while from time to time she pressed her hand against her side with a distressful motion which reminded Mary of some picture she had seen wherein a woman was staunching with a handkerchief her own heart’s blood.

‘If that is so,’ she went on, ‘and you think you could put up with the caprices of an old woman, Miss Marvon, it has occurred to me that you might come to me at Letcombe Dottrell. You will be near your old friend, Mrs. Sotheran, you know,’ she added hastily, almost eagerly, ‘and we should do our best to make you happy.’

‘But really, Mrs. Peyton, I scarcely understand,’ stammered Mary. ‘Do you wish me to occupy the same position as I did with Mrs. Beckett?’

‘Just so; something of that kind. Only, if there was anything distasteful, it can be remedied. There is not much going on at Letcombe Dottrell outside the Hall, but we have our own society. I think I can honestly promise you a comfortable home.’

The last two words appeared in Mr. Tidman’s prospectus, and were used to attract those persons to whom the size and splendour of the establishment (which were dwelt upon in another place) might fail to allure to it; but common as was the phrase, it lost its conventional sense as spoken by Mrs. Peyton; her voice was so gentle, her manner so earnest, that it was clear when she said ‘home’ she meant it.

Mary’s heart was almost too full for speech. The misery of her present position, which would have caused her to spurn with a sort of fierce despair any overtures of assistance from the quarter

from which she had apprehended it, made this proposal seem like a helping hand reached down from heaven. The harsh experience and disappointments of the last few days had put her more out of heart and hope, as respected her future, than she had acknowledged to herself; and the eagerness, with which she had snatched at this prospect of emancipation from her troubles, brought home to her for the first time how deeply she had sunk in the slough of despondency, and how hopeless she had been of extrication. She would have welcomed gladly almost any method of gaining her own livelihood that promised peace and security; but what had been offered her was better than the best she could have hoped for. At Letcombe Dottrell she would be neighbour to one, who, however she might have erred in judgment, had ever proved herself to be a loyal and loving friend; and just now any one who had showed her kindness in old times, and was unassociated with her late bitter experience, was doubly dear to her. Of Mr. Beryl Peyton she had heard much, and upon the whole what she had heard was greatly to his advantage: his very eccentricities seemed always 'to lean to virtue's side,' and become exaggerated types of benevolence. While, what was of much more importance to her, his wife, her future employer, appeared to be the very quintessence of gentleness and refinement.

If Mary had had any 'knowledge of the world'—a phrase which usually not only implies an acquaintance with natures of the baser sort, but a familiarity with them that fails to breed contempt—she would have concealed her joy, and affected to weigh her visitor's proposal in the scales of advantage. If even she had been of a reasonably practical turn of mind, she would have made inquiry as to conditions, prospects, salary. But being, for all her cleverness and good sense, very simple, and unaccustomed to express herself otherwise than naturally, and being very thankful for what had happened, when Mrs. Peyton mentioned that word 'home' so earnestly, poor Mary fairly burst into tears.

This was foolish of her, and as it would seem unfortunate, for it affected her visitor in the most distressing way.

'Oh dear, oh dear,' she cried, in a strange frightened tone, 'this will never do;' then rose and fled, as if to a sanctuary, to the bow window, from which, with her back to Mary, she held forth upon the necessity of the control of the feelings. The advice was excellent, but what slightly detracted from it was the occasional breakdowns, uncalled-for pauses, on the speaker's own part, during which it was evident that she was 'giving way' herself.

'I am quite surprised at this conduct, my dear—you can't help it, of course, but you should try to help it; because it's a foolish weakness, quite unworthy of you, or of any person of sense' (pause and sob). 'You must have had a very bad time of it here, I fear, to be so moved by such a commonplace offer; a hard and lonely lot'—(pause, and prolonged weeping). 'Pray understand that I only came here to make you a business proposal. It gives me great pleasure to find that it meets your views, my dear, but there's nothing, nothing' (sob) 'to cry about on either side—it's merely a matter of mutual convenience.'

'I see that, I know that, at least so far as you are concerned, Mrs. Peyton,' said Mary, recovering herself. 'I have no right whatever, and it is, I feel, not only weak, but very impertinent of me to—to——'

'Not impertinent—oh no, very natural, my dear,' put in the old lady.

'Yes, that must be my excuse,' said Mary eagerly, and brushing away the last tear: 'it was only natural that such unlooked-for kindness in a stranger——'

Mrs. Peyton, still standing with her back to her, shook her head.

'Perhaps I should have said "such kindness in one who is personally a stranger"—yes, it moved me, madam, more than was meet, I know, but of late I have not been accustomed to kindness.'

'Poor child, poor child! Pray don't'—here she held up her gloved hand for silence—'don't say another word. You must promise me never to give way again—never, never—at Letcombe Dottrell. Do you quite understand that? We must be cheerful, and quiet, and happy. You very much distress me (without your meaning it at all, I'm sure) when you shed tears.'

'I am quite right now, Mrs. Peyton,' said Mary, smiling. 'You needn't be afraid to look at me.'

'Afraid! Why should I be afraid?—And now, when can you come?'

She was once more standing face to face with Mary; her features pale as ashes, but not more pale than usual, and all trace of emotion swept away.

'Whenever you please,' answered Mary.

'Very good, Mr. Rennie will arrange about that. I forgot to say that he is a friend of mine, or rather of my husband's, as well as of yours. It was he who first mentioned you to Mr. Peyton. You will clearly understand that, if you please.'

Mary had not understood this, nor did she see the necessity of so unimportant a point being insisted on, but of course she nodded adhesion.

‘As to terms and duties,’ continued Mrs. Peyton, ‘perhaps we had also better leave that to Mr. Rennie; that will make him responsible for the whole affair, as it were. Mr. Peyton prefers everything of a domestic kind to be managed through his lawyer; it will therefore be more advisable, perhaps, not to speak to him of my present visit. Not, of course that we have anything to conceal from my husband, but he is very peculiar.’

Mary once more bowed her head; nothing that her visitor could have told her of Mr. Beryl Peyton would have impressed her more than what she had already heard from others. ‘Peculiarity’ was, she knew, a very faint term indeed by which to express his eccentricities.

Still she hardly liked the notion of keeping Mrs. Beryl Peyton’s visit a secret from her husband and her own future employer.

‘Mr. Rennie will arrange everything,’ continued her visitor, perceiving perhaps a trace of discomfort in the young girl’s face. ‘You may dismiss all doubt and trouble about this matter from your mind. You will hear from me—no, not from me,’ she added, correcting herself with a certain anxious earnestness—‘from him, to-morrow or next day. Until then, or rather till I see you, good-bye, my dear, good-bye.’

As she spoke she drew towards Mary with a quickness of movement which could hardly have been expected in one of her advanced age, and, what was much more surprising still, stooped down and kissed her. The next moment she had left the room (scattering a little crowd of curious watchers and waiters in the little hall, who scuttled away at the noise of her approach like rabbits into their burrows), and opening the front door with her own hands marched to her carriage, at which the footman with a nut in his mouth (for he had been whiling away the hours with cracking and eating those unkindly fruits of the earth) had drawn himself up only just in time into that attitude of senseless stiffness miscalled ‘attention.’

(To be continued.)

Wind-Force, and How it is Measured.

AFTER the lapse of a great many years, I have still a vivid recollection of being wakened one Sunday night by a tremendous crash, which, to my infantile mind, seemed the beginning of the end. A pane of glass had been blown in, and the wind had made a clean sweep of the dressing-table which stood before the window, the particular crash being, I believe, occasioned by the fall of the looking-glass. A storm of unexampled fury was raging, and continued through the next forenoon; slates and chimney-pots were flying about freely, though perhaps dangerously; and I can remember one large piece of wood, which my memory records as a scaffolding-plank, going up the street as if it had been a feather—all which I saw more clearly, because our tutor, having a proper regard for his personal safety, did not pay us his appointed visit, and I had unlimited leave to watch at the window. It was a great day for the glaziers: almost all our neighbours had one or more window panes broken; to get new ones put in at once was out of the question, and wooden panels were everywhere fitted as temporary but immediate substitutes.

This childish reminiscence belongs to the great storm which passed over Liverpool January 6–7, 1839. I had before then read stories of shipwreck, and I have since had many experiences of storms in different parts of the world, by sea and by land; but I can still refer to that Sunday night and Monday forenoon as having given me the first real and practical idea of what wind is capable of doing. Most of my readers can probably recall some similar occasion when their attention was first arrested by the extreme violence which wind can manifest, when, like a mountain stream, it rushes furiously onwards, or, swaying and whirling as it goes, seems to blow from every point of the compass. So Virgil has described it, and, after him, Dryden in more familiar language:—

The raging winds rush through the hollow wound,
And dance aloft in air, and skim along the ground;
Then, settling on the sea, the surges sweep,
Raise liquid mountains and disclose the deep,
South, East, and West, with mixed confusion roar,
And roll the foaming billows to the shore.

This is no poetic exaggeration. It is, indeed, almost beyond the power of poetry or language to exaggerate the force of wind in a storm; and anything that has been written in verse is tame compared with the exact details given by the most matter-of-fact writers of prose. Even John Evelyn, who, throughout his long life, showed himself the possessor of a most calm and philosophic temper, was, in his eighty-fourth year, kindled to enthusiasm when describing the losses caused by the great storm—November 26, 1703. ‘Methinks,’ he wrote, ‘I still hear—sure I am that I still feel the dismal groans of our forests when that dreadful hurricane subverted so many thousands of goodly oaks, prostrating the trees, laying them in ghastly postures, like whole regiments fallen in battle by the sword of the conqueror, and crushing all that grew beneath them.’ His detailed statement of damage is still more interesting: ‘The public accounts reckon no less than 3,000 brave oaks in one part only of the Forest of Dean blown down; in New Forest, in Hampshire, about 4,000; and in about 450 parks and groves, from 200 large trees to 1,000 of excellent timber, without counting fruit and orchard trees *sans* number; and proportionally the same through all the considerable woods of the nation. Sir Edward Harley had 1,300 blown down; myself about 2,000, several of which, torn up by their fall, raised mounds of earth near twenty feet high, with great stones entangled among the roots and rubbish.’

This, it must be remembered, is what is historically known as the Great Storm. Sensational accounts of it are everywhere ready to hand; but there are no measurements which enable us to compare it exactly with any storm of which we have had experience. It would be easy to note the losses of our navy in the Downs and in the North Sea; but it is impossible to say that these do not tell as much of want of vigilance and precaution, of rotten cables or of dishonest officials, as of the violence of the wind. Buildings, chimney-stacks, and so forth, have been often mentioned, but they may have been already crumbling to decay; and where there is no note of their condition, their downfall is no measure of the force which has upset them. The trees, as enumerated by Evelyn, give, perhaps, the best scale that we have; but even that is by no means satisfactory, for there are many causes other than the strength of the wind which increase or decrease this effect: drought, for instance, on the one hand, or soaking rain on the other; the absence of foliage, or its presence; and it happens, unfortunately for purposes of comparison—still more unfortunately

for the beauty of our woodlands—that the only storm of recent times which may be supposed to have equalled in intensity the storm of 1703, occurred nearly two months earlier in point of season, on October 14 instead of December 7—the equivalent, according to the New Style, of November 26.

On October 14, 1881, a storm passed over this country, doing, in many respects, more damage than any on record. The ships of our navy were not, indeed, strewed broadcast on the shore, as happened in 1703, partly because they were less exposed to the storm, partly because the anchors and cables of to-day are enormously stronger than those of 180 years ago; but of merchant ships, 146, and possibly more, were lost on different parts of the coast. All over the country the damage to buildings was very great; and the number of forest trees thrown down was altogether unprecedented. That spoken of by Evelyn seems slight in comparison. Round and in the neighbourhood of London the destruction was sad enough. In Windsor Park 961 trees were blown down, and upwards of 1,000 more were seriously damaged; in Greenwich Park, small in comparison, 35 trees went down; at Kingston 15 large elms, in a row, were torn up bodily, displacing an enormous quantity of earth; and similarly all over the home counties. At Coventry 500 full-grown trees were down within three miles of the town; at Tamworth thousands uprooted or broken within a radius of a few miles; about 2,000 in the district round Bridgenorth. But it was more distinctly in the north-east of the country that the figures attained their maximum. At Loftus, Cleveland, 1,030 trees were uprooted, and many more damaged; at Upleatham, Redcar, 1,390 trees uprooted; at Morpeth trees by the hundred uprooted or snapped; at Alnwick Castle about 4,200, mostly large ones; lanes were ploughed through the plantations in straight lines; within four miles of Kelso at least 3,000 large trees were reported down; at Langton, Dunse, in Berwickshire, at least 5,000 trees down, including one clump of 60 magnificent beeches; and some of the adjacent estates suffered still more terribly. But at Tynninghame, Whitekirk, in Haddingtonshire, the figures seem to run almost wild; some weeks after the gale the number of trees blown down had not been exactly ascertained, but was estimated as not less than from 30,000 to 40,000.

Commenting on all which, the 'Journal of Forestry'¹ said: 'Such general and widespread destruction to trees and plantations

¹ November 1881. See also *Quarterly Journal of the Meteorological Society*, January 1882, vol. viii. p. 9.

in this country as occurred on the 14th of October, is not on record; at least we have failed to find any account of a former storm so terribly disastrous to trees in every part of the country. It is difficult to point to any district where the trees have not suffered severely from the gale; but its greatest strength appears to have been felt along the eastern coasts, and inland to the backbone of the country. In all districts with an eastern exposure the work of destruction is indeed lamentable. Hundreds or thousands of splendid trees, some historical, many ancestral, and all worthy of passing remark, have been overwhelmed in the general ruin, and centuries must elapse before the spots on which they stood can again be clothed and adorned with such grand monarchs of the forest.'

Clearly, then, if we could judge by trees alone, this recent gale of October 14, 1881, exceeded in violence the Great Storm of 1703. But, as I have already said, the comparison is not accurate; for on October 14 the trees still had most of their leaves, and must necessarily have suffered the more on that account. In addition to which, other conditions have to be considered; and the observer at Kelso, whilst recording the loss of 3,000 trees, says, 'we have had more damage done to buildings by previous storms, though never so much to trees; but the trees were in leaf, the ground was very wet, and the gale came from an unusual direction, NNE.'

I have attempted this vague comparison between these two great storms, occurring at the distance of 178 years, mainly to illustrate the difficulties which lie in the way of any estimate of the force of wind from mere accounts of destruction. Trees and their surrounding conditions vary enormously with the season; buildings may be anything a builder likes, from an Egyptian pyramid to a suburban villa; and mortar may be mostly lime or mostly mud. It is thus that no satisfactory conclusion can be drawn from records of ruin and desolation; and where anything like a true appreciation of the power of wind is wanted, recourse must be had to some exact and well-defined system of measurement. To arrive at this, a great many very different attempts have been made, with results which differ extremely among themselves; every different attempt has its own peculiar difficulties, and we are not yet able to say that in any one direction have the difficulties been fully overcome.

The first ideas on the subject were, however, that the thing was extremely simple; a piece of stout cardboard six inches square

was stuck at its middle point on to the end of a light wooden rod, such as a lead pencil; this rod fitted into a case, and at the farther end of it, or by means of a collar, pressed against a spiral spring, thus forming an arrangement roughly like a spring letter-balance or an Eagle automatic pencil. Such an instrument was to be held with the face of the cardboard to the wind; the distance it was pressed back gave the measure of the wind force, just as in the letter-balance the distance through which the plate is pressed down gives the measure of the letter's weight. Nothing could be simpler or more natural; and with many modifications of detail, some such instrument is even now accepted as a means of measuring the pressure of wind.

And yet its indications are, and must be, extremely vague. For, in the first place, how or where is it to be fixed? As originally proposed it was held in the hand of the observer, who pointed it to the wind; but, very clearly, the wind blowing against the observer's body might bound back and strike the plate on the wrong side; so that the indication of the rod would be, not the pressure on the face of the plate, but the excess of that pressure above that of the 'back-slaps' on the back; and of course the value of this reflex pressure was quite uncertain and very variable. In a strong wind it would be relatively more than in a light wind; with a fat man or one with short arms for an observer, it would be greater than with a thin or a long-armed man; and many other differences, which were not thought of, rendered the indications almost meaningless.

It was, however, very soon determined that the instrument must be independent. It was accordingly pivoted on a spindle, and, by means of a vane or weathercock, was made to turn of itself, so as always to face the wind. At the same time, the plate was made of some substance more durable than cardboard—as, for instance, of sheet copper; and since, at a little distance, it might be difficult to see how far the plate was driven back, it was easily made to register itself by pulling on a wire which could be led, in the same way as a bell-wire, so as to act at any convenient place. The different methods of registering are very numerous, but the best may be described, in one class, as dragging a pencil up or down, backwards or forwards, on a sheet of paper which is itself made to move regularly onwards by means of clockwork. Such an instrument, with its springs or weights giving the resistance, and with its delicate registering gear, is evidently a very different thing from the square cardboard stuck—perhaps by a bit of cobbler's

wax—on to the end of a stick. But as far as the wind is concerned the principle is exactly the same; and the question is, Does the instrument, whether in its primitive or more refined form, really measure the force of the wind?

It is now most commonly fixed on top of a house or observatory, where it is subject, not indeed to ‘back-slaps’ from something behind it, but to the peculiar deflections of air currents, which are formed by the wind blowing against the side of the house on which it stands. When wind blows against a wall, it is broken up and deflected in all directions, backwards, upwards, and sideways, and rushes round the ends or the top of the wall with concentrated force, as any one may find at the corner of a street or block of buildings on a windy day. It is the same at the top; and if the plate by which the wind-force is measured is near the edge of the roof, so as to come within this concentrated current, it is very evidently acted on by a force considerably greater than that which the wind, by its own special motion, is capable of exercising. Nor is the error necessarily remedied by moving the instrument back, so as to be out of this intensified gust; for just behind it there is a space where there is little or no wind at all; a space under the lee of the edge, over which the concentrated stream bounds and passes away.

Nor is an anemometer, or wind-gauge, at all necessary to show these peculiar effects. Some few years ago, I found myself, one very windy day, on the top of Grassmoor in Cumberland. For those who do not know that magnificent hill, I may describe its summit as a broad grassy level, and its south-western side as exceedingly steep and almost precipitous, frowning, naked and red, over Crummock Water. Now, walking that day on this grassy plateau, I was quite well aware that it was blowing a fresh gale; but strolling in the direction of Crummock, I found the wind die away to the gentlest of fitful breezes, till suddenly a gust of extreme violence, blowing upwards, inflated my monkey-jacket, which I wore buttoned, lifted me off my legs, and hurled me backwards; whilst a little fox-terrier that I had with me was rolled over and over in the most helpless and grotesque manner.

Effects similar to these, whether greater or less in degree, are felt by every anemometer on top of a house: it is impossible to say to what extent; or that the wind thus registered has any uniform relation to the wind actually blowing; and all that can be said decidedly and positively is that the records of an anemometer on the top of a house are, from their very nature, inexact; and that

the great care which is frequently expended in constructing the instrument and in taking the observations is, to a very great extent, labour in vain.

This applies to every attempt to measure the force of wind. The top of a house is not a suitable place; but quite apart from this, the plate to indicate the pressure is subject to errors and difficulties peculiarly its own. Just as against a wall, so against the plate, the wind, as it impinges, is broken and deflected in every different direction; it is dammed up and compressed in the centre; but all around it the currents are streaming outwards, more or less parallel to the face, and clearly not exerting a full pressure on it. From this cause, the pressure on the front of the plate, near the edge, is less than it ought to be. But, on the other hand, the wind, with concentrated strength, rushes past the edge of the plate, tears away the air which lies behind it, and causes a comparative vacuum, which, as it were, sucks, or tends to suck, the plate away; or, at any rate, permits it to yield more easily to the blast on its face. And the degree of this vacuum is quite uncertain. It appears to change with changes in the force of the wind, and to depend also on the shape of the plate. A round plate and a square plate, of exactly the same size, if set up close to each other, do not give the same indications, the difference being probably due to the greater length of the square's circumference. However that may be, it follows that the plate is necessarily subject to three sources of error: the accumulation of pressure on its face near the centre; the diminution of pressure on the face near the edge; and the withdrawal of pressure from the rear. Two of these would magnify the effect of the wind; one would decrease it; but all distort it, and render the indications of the instrument something possibly very different from the real pressure of the wind.

I will not now speak of the many efforts that have been made to ascertain the value of these distortions, so as to allow for them and correct them; none of them seem to me distinctly successful; and the result, at the present time, is that whilst some of our most experienced observers believe that the errors nearly neutralise each other, others maintain that the indication of the plate is nearly double what it ought to be; for my own part, I think it is greater, though not perhaps so much as double; but there is absolutely no evidence which can be considered conclusive. All this, however, is strangely forgotten, or perhaps even not known by many who talk or write of wind-pressure as of a thing accu-

rately determined. As a matter of fact, what we do know is but little more than a rough guess.

But the common way of measuring the force of wind in England, over the greater part of Europe, and in America, is not by a pressure-plate of any pattern, but by the revolutions of a fan, the form of which, after various changes, has settled down into that introduced by the late Dr. Robinson, and known familiarly as 'Robinson's cups.' It is this that is everywhere seen; four hemispherical cups or bowls at the arms of a cross turning freely on a vertical spindle. Owing to the very different pressure which the wind exerts on the concave and convex sides of such bowls, a fan so constructed can turn only in one direction; and the rotation is easily enough conveyed down the spindle to some sort of gearing, clockwork or electrical, below; the difficulties of this are simply those of mechanism, and in this present age have been completely overcome; so that the revolutions of the fan are registered with almost perfect accuracy. But when that is done, what have we got? The speed of the cups, as the fan goes round, is very evidently not the speed of the wind; for the motion is due, not to the absolute, but to the relative pressure of the wind on the concave side of the bowls, acting fully only in certain occasional positions. Dr. Robinson originally taught that the speed of the cups multiplied by 3 gave the speed of the wind; and from that time to this, this simple rule has been generally acted on.

Of late years, however, it has been shown that the true rule is by no means so simple; that the multiplier is different for almost every different instrument, or even for the same instrument at different times; that it depends on the size of the cups, the length of the arms, the friction of the bearings, and, in some cases at least, on the velocity of the wind. And these variations are not small. In the course of a long series of experiments, the values of the multiplier were found to range from 2 to 5; but the larger numbers were exceptional, and 2.4 has been recommended for general use. The multiplier 3 has, however, taken firm root all over the country, and is still used; so that in all probability all records of wind-velocity, such as are frequently referred to in our newspapers, are about 20 per cent. in excess of the truth.

And this estimate of error is quite independent of that other error already spoken of, which is due to the position of the anemometer on the top of a house. Now considerably more than

nine-tenths of the observations of wind which are made in this country are made with a 'Robinson's Anemometer' placed on the top of a house; with the result that the velocity of wind, as ordinarily quoted, is as vague and undetermined as the pressure. I see no reason to doubt that a Robinson's anemometer, whose coefficient has been carefully determined by direct experiment, and which is properly exposed to the wind, on top of a pole twenty or thirty, or perhaps forty, feet high, and standing in an open field, may give a fairly correct measure of wind-velocity; but those measures which are ordinarily obtained are good for little except to talk about and squabble over.

It is thus then that very great doubt still exists as to the pressure which wind is capable of exercising. Three years ago we were startled and horrified by the news that the Tay Bridge had fallen when a train was passing over it; and the investigation which followed brought into prominent notice, not only the very great diversity of opinion as to wind-pressure, but the necessity that some definite result should be arrived at. It appeared from the examination of engineers of the highest repute that they had no exact knowledge as to whether the extreme probable force of wind should be taken as ten pounds on a square foot, or twenty, or forty. It was admitted that pressures of forty pounds had been registered; but they were considered so exceptional and restricted, that it had been deemed unnecessary to make a full provision for them. But on October 14, 1881, a pressure of fifty-three pounds was registered at Greenwich, almost at the very minute when thirty-five magnificent trees in the immediate neighbourhood were prostrated; that particular gust of intense pressure was by no means restricted to an area of a few yards. Nor is this pressure of 53 pounds the highest that has been recorded. During a gale at Liverpool, in March 1871, the pencil was driven far beyond the scale, and was estimated to have marked a pressure of ninety pounds. It is impossible to say whether these are actual pressures or not. Professor Stokes, who speaks with very high authority, considers that the register of a pressure-plate is 80 per cent. too high; a correction which would reduce these pressures to thirty and to fifty pounds on the square foot; but many observers and men of great practical experience (amongst others, Mr. Osler and Mr. Symons) believe that the registered pressure is, by a balance of errors, not very far from the truth.

The conversion of velocity into pressure is equally uncertain. It is quite evident that the greater the velocity of the wind

the greater is the pressure which it exercises; and from theoretical considerations it may be assumed that the pressure varies as the square of the velocity: that is to say, if a velocity of 20 miles an hour corresponds to a pressure of 1 pound on the square foot, then a velocity of 40 miles would correspond to a pressure of 4 lbs.; of 60 miles, to a pressure of 9 lbs.; of 100 miles, to a pressure of 25 lbs.; and so on. But, as we have already seen, it is impossible to say with any certainty that the velocity of 20 miles an hour does correspond to a pressure of 1 pound: the best that we can say is, that men like Professor Stokes consider this the most satisfactory estimate, though others, of perhaps more practical experience, have maintained that the pressure is a good deal higher. But even this, the lowest estimate which can be accepted, leads us to a knowledge of pressures a great deal higher than have ever been registered by a pressure plate; probably because Robinson's anemometer, which registers velocity, is so much more commonly used. Mr. Scott has, for instance, spoken of recorded velocities of 180 miles, which would correspond to pressures of 81 lbs.; and velocities still greater have been observed.

In the terrific whirlwind which passed over Walmer, on October 24, 1878, there was no register of either velocity or pressure, for the wind made a clean sweep of everything that stood before it: from the condition to which it reduced the town there can be no doubt that the force of the wind was tremendous, though it is quite possible that a great deal of the damage was done not by the wind, as commonly understood, but by the sudden and extreme rarefaction of the air. Mr. Symons thinks that this rarefaction may have been as much as $\cdot 2$ inch of the mercurial barometer, giving to the air, in buildings over which it passed, a lifting power of about 14 lbs. per square foot; an opinion which he supports by reference to 'records of the vertical lifting of slated roofs, and the simultaneous *outward* explosion of the walls of houses, even *towards* the wind.'¹

There can be no doubt whatever that the lifting power exercised by whirlwinds is extraordinary, and gives rise to very remarkable phenomena. Showers of fishes, frogs, and such like, are merely the return to earth of things that have been lifted up in this way. A few years ago a pond near Banbury was thus taken up—frogs, fishes, and all—and put down in a field about a quarter of a mile off. Storms of this class are comparatively rare

¹ *Quarterly Journal of the Meteorological Society* (January 1882), vol. viii. p. 3.

in England: in France they are of much more frequent occurrence, and display this lifting power in even an exaggerated degree. One that passed near Vendôme, on October 3, 1871, after taking off the roof of a barn, lifted bodily out of it a country cart which had been left inside: the walls of the barn were not injured, but the cart was found about 150 yards away.

It is, however, in America that these whirlwinds—or, as they are there called, tornadoes—attain their greatest violence. A report recently issued by the Signal Service of the United States¹ advises ‘persons living in regions frequented by tornadoes to prepare underground dwellings at convenient distances from their houses. Each should be large enough to admit at least from ten to fifteen persons, and to hold valuable articles taken from the houses for safety. In selecting a locality, it would be best, if possible, to cut into a side hill or knoll, and to make the entrance of the retreat flush with the adjoining sides of the bank. Very few wooden buildings, however constructed—except, perhaps, a square low building, with hip roof—will withstand the terrific whirl of the tornado-cloud, or the powerful inrushing currents from the south side of the storm’s centre.’ And on another page it says: ‘The velocity of the wind within the cloud-vortex was variously estimated at from 70 to 800 miles an hour, the average being 392 miles.’ It would have been interesting to have had some notice of the way in which these velocities were estimated: an average of 392 tells of supposed accuracy; but they were certainly not measured, and a velocity of 800 miles an hour, corresponding, on the lowest basis of calculation, to a pressure of three-quarters of a ton on the square foot, does seem almost incredible. There is, however, no reason to doubt that, over a very limited area, the velocity and pressure of the wind in these tornadoes or whirlwinds are very much greater than any that have ever been accurately measured, or that, with our present knowledge, can be measured; for no anemometer that has yet been devised could stand such rough usage.

From a civil engineer’s point of view, the question of wind-pressure is one of vital importance, and the interest which attaches to it is extreme; but the practical difficulties in the way of its solution are so great, that, only last April, Mr. Barlow, speaking at the Institution of Civil Engineers, said: ‘Notwithstanding all the wisdom of the Institution, engineers are not at present very

¹ *Report on the Character of Six Hundred Tornadoes*, by Sergeant J. P. Finley, 1882.

far advanced in their knowledge with regard to wind ;' and in the same discussion Mr. E. A. Cowper said 'Engineers wanted definite information on the subject. Almost every speaker had confessed his ignorance with regard to it.' Careful observations, with a number of anemometers well exposed, might give most valuable information ; but 'if engineering structures had to be placed in positions such as those favourable for anemometers, all he could say was that they were very unfavourable positions for engineering structures. It would, however, be ascertained in those positions what was the extreme pressure the structures would have to bear, and then make them accordingly.'

To meteorologists the question is rather of wind-velocity than of wind-pressure ; they want to know, not the requisite strength of a structure, but the nature of the transference of masses of air from one place to another. It seems to me that the observations, as generally taken, are, for this purpose, almost useless. It is, for instance, familiarly known that wind is commonly much stronger at any height above the ground than it is near the ground ; it has been estimated that the pressure at 70 feet above the ground is double what it is at 10 feet ; at 160 feet it is treble. Such a rule is convenient for engineers whose structure is at some definite height ; but to meteorologists it makes confusion worse confounded. At a height of about 300 feet the velocity of the wind at any time is, roughly speaking, twice what it is at a height of 10 feet ; at greater heights, the velocity is, or may be, still greater. What, then is the 'velocity of translation,' the velocity with which some considerable mass of air is borne from one place to another ? It is, and must be, very uncertain ; for the engineering rule just referred to cannot be depended on at heights beyond the ordinary range of engineering works. We know, for instance, by means of balloon observations, that the velocity of the wind at considerable heights may be very much greater than at the surface ; but also that it may, on the other hand, be very much less, or that it may be in a very different direction. It is thus evident that any argument as to the translation of air rests on a very hypothetical foundation, and cannot be used without very great care.

As a check on this uncertainty, meteorologists have always been in the habit of noticing the drift of the clouds, which is in itself a valuable indication. It would be still more valuable if the height of the clouds could be determined ; but that is always troublesome, and indeed impossible, except in rare cases. Early in this past year

Mr. Francis Galton suggested some experiments with small shell fired from a mortar; these, on bursting, formed a well-defined cloud, whose height and motion could be observed with tolerable accuracy. It was found that with 6-lb. shells fired with an elevation of 75° , the height of the smoke-cloud was 9,500 feet;¹ but no observations of velocity have been published; and I am led to believe that the experiments had to be suspended on account of the war in Egypt.

I cannot but suppose that to many of my readers this article will seem eminently unsatisfactory: it professes to treat of the way in which the force of wind is measured, and the only conclusion arrived at is that no exact measurements have yet been made. But even that very limited amount of information is, I hope, something to the good. In every branch of science the first real step in advance is a feeling of ignorance; and in anemometry much evil has resulted from the common idea that our anemometers do all that we want them to do. If of the many thousands who are interested in meteorology and mechanism some few can be brought to realise that here is an opportunity for their inventive genius and constructive skill, so much is gained. I have explained some of the difficulties in the use of the pressure-plate; can any one help to remove them? I have spoken of the errors of the fan; can any one help to determine them? We do not ask for refinements in the gearing or the registering apparatus; these are already immeasurably better than the instruments to which they are applied. What we do ask for, is some way of removing the uncertainty which at present exists as to the interpretation of the record.

J. K. LAUGHTON.

¹ *Report of the Meteorological Council* (1882), p. 24.

A Northman's Story.

BY MRS. PARR, AUTHOR OF 'DOROTHY FOX,' 'ROBIN,' &c.

I.

ON the coast of Norway, halfway between Stavanger and Bergen, among the many lighthouses which mark the spots of especial danger, not one stands more conspicuous than the Folgernaes, a little north of that long broken line of reef which stretches out from Voldö.

Bare, wild, desolate, the sight of a human habitation on that lonely rock seems to send through the beholder a shudder—there, on the very summit crowning its pinnacle, stands the lighthouse, and by its side the low white-painted dwelling of those whose duty it is to keep the light in order.

Except for the railed-round walk, levelled to keep watch from, every inch of ground must be scrambled over, and a line of staples driven into the rock points the almost sheer descent to where a boat lies sheltered below.

Seldom do the elements favour the wishes of those who feel a curiosity to land here; and it is mostly due to necessity or misadventure that the spot is ever visited by a stranger. Should chance in either form have carried one there, he would not long ago have been brought face to face with two whose lives by a strange fatality seemed linked together, Henrik Larsen and Nils Kroll.

Though near of an age the one to the other, while Larsen's hair was already grey, his face lined, and his heavy figure slouched and bent down from the shoulders, Kroll's still youthful-looking face met your gaze with a frank cheery smile; he was possessed of a fund of good humour, and his movements were quick and active as becomes a smart sailor.

'What made you come here, Nils? What makes you stay?' were questions I had kept on my lips ever since I first saw him, and some years had gone by since then, each season bringing me to Norway to the same neighbourhood, when certainly once during

my stay I contrived to pass a day—sometimes lengthened into two or three—with my friends the two lighthouse men.

At first Larsen would only growl a reply to me, but about the third year—seeing that my determination not to leave without seeing them made me run a risk of considerable danger—his mood softened, and, after his sombre fashion, he deigned to bid me welcome. Nils' pleasure in my company was very outspoken, and steadily increased as we got to know each other better. In his early days he had spent some time in England, and though by every opportunity I had, through magazines and newspapers, I tried to quench his thirst for knowledge, much more satisfactory to him than reading was my presence and the intercourse we held together.

Larsen usually took advantage of my being there to have a fit of 'the shivers,' only a pretext for Nils enjoying my company unrestrainedly, as whatever there was to do he did it. Nothing would have given him greater offence than for Nils to disturb himself in any way.

'I talk it all over with him after,' Nils would say; 'and that's what he likes—if he ever listens to what's going on it must be in his own way.'

I smiled. Time had taught me how attached to each other were these men; the causes which bound them still remained a mystery.

There are occasions when confidences seem begotten by the atmosphere; the sun, the sky, the moaning wind each brings an influence to bear. Nils and I, sheltered in a hollow—where, dropped in the rock, we could stand leaning our elbows on a ledge in front of us—were watching the departing glories of a northern sunset. It was late in the season. I was homeward bound, the next day was the day of parting. I had seized the opportunity of unusually calm weather to pay an extra visit to Folgernaes while waiting for the steamer which would put in for me on its way to Stavanger.

A few hours before, when all around was calm and still, Larsen—to whom croaking came as natural as a raven—predicted that there would be more wind, and now the clouds broken up in fleecy masses over the sky promised that the morrow would bear truth to his prophecy. The edge of each cloud was a golden setting which deepened and spread out towards the fiery orb already slowly sinking.

I do not know how long we had stood silent—we were both

smoking—when, as well as I can remember, for the first time I heard Nils sigh heavily.

‘I fear, my poor fellow,’ I said, ‘this half imprisonment is often very irksome to you.’

He shook his head, but in a way that did not quite answer me, and suddenly I found myself asking why he had come, what had brought him there, and he was saying, ‘I’ll tell you. I should like you to know, what nobody else has ever heard, my story—which means the story of us two. Henrik,’ and he nodded back to the lighthouse, where Larsen was trimming the lamp, ‘and I were both born in Bergen, and from children there ran the streets together. What made us such close chums I don’t know, for his people were more well to do than mine; he had a father living, I but a widowed mother. Besides this, he was three years older—something important that in the age of boys; and then the difference in our dispositions, nothing could be wider. He was shy and retiring, called sullen because he did not speak, and obstinate when he would not give way. Somehow I could generally manage him, and coax him out of any ill-humour; and not seeing his faults, as others named them, he obtained a great influence over me. I worshipped his resolution and his courage to endure, and looked on him as a hero because, though his father might thrash him within an inch of his life, he could not make him give in.

‘Old Larsen was an ill-conditioned, violent man; and all the family, it seemed to me, except Henrik, were like him. There was little peace in the house, so Henrik took to spending his evenings with me; my mother, because he was attached to me, making him welcome, although on a few occasions he drew on himself her displeasure by betraying jealousy.

‘While still a very young lad, with my mother’s apron-string not loosened round me, it became necessary that I should part from her. A shipmate of my father’s came over from North Shields. He was in want of a boy, and he made an offer for me. ‘To be turned into sailors seemed to me then the sole reason why boys were brought into the world. All my companions, their fathers, the men we knew, were connected with the sea. How was it possible to have any other ambition? My heart was filled with joy to think I was about to enter on this life. I knew of only two regrets: I had to part from my mother, and Henrik was not going with me. Old Larsen had other views for him; he meant to place him with a cousin, who was a fish-salter.

‘That first rough apprenticeship was the beginning of my picking up the English I know, and it served me in good stead when I got back again to Bergen and was looking about for something better to do.

‘Four years I had been absent, and it seemed as if it could not have been more than a day, for all was as I left it. I knew the people I met in the streets, although not one of them remembered me; the wares in the shop-windows looked still familiar; and Mother Olsen, sitting in the Torv Almendingen under the steps of Handelsmand Dybvad’s house, had the same horns of currants and tied-up sticks of cherries, and was knitting away at the long leg of a stocking just as I left her.

‘I quickened my steps home, because the tears would come into my eyes—all my life through they’ve played me that nasty trick of getting suddenly watery. My mother, I asked myself—would she recognise me?

‘One of the first questions I put after freeing myself from her embrace was, “And Henrik, where is he?”

‘Very little letter-writing had been kept up between us while I was away. Mother, with four of them younger than me to work for, had too much to do, and I was a slave, kicked and driven by everybody. It was the usual fate of a collier-boy in that day.

‘“Henrik has left Bergen. His father is mad against him. He has run away.” Where, she did not know, only he had gone to sea, “to seek you,” she added, “for he has never had another friend.”

‘No more had I; but then, a stranger in a foreign land, I had no opportunity; Henrik had many. His constancy flattered my vanity, which, as I dare say you have seen, is a weak point with me.

‘That evening I set to work, to find him out, and very soon I was put on his track; so that, having got a berth on board a Hamburger detained in Bergen for repairs, at Hamburg I came upon him, and it was not long before he joined our ship’s company; and thus the intimacy of our boyhood was restored.

‘By this time I could not help seeing that Henrik had grown into a queer kind of chap; not that I had anything to complain of, excepting through his jealousy. No matter who it might be—old, young, man, dog (we had not the chance of its being a woman in those days)—if they liked me he hated them, and would go to work at scheming how he could set us one against the other.

‘Lots of chaps wanted to chum with me. Not one cared

for Larsen. I cannot quite tell why. If he was rough and surly, so were they ; at least the most of them. Still, by common consent he was treated as an outsider—seldom noticed, never confided in.

‘Strange as it seems, this did not appear to give him so much pain as it gave me ; and, to my surprise, I soon noticed, that while they might slight or annoy him without rousing his anger, I had but to show the most trivial preference for anybody to throw him into a fury. A slavish affection is certain to become irksome, and I was beginning to fret under the gall of its fetter when, we having by this time reached Monte Video, I fell sick of the fever.

‘It was desperately hot weather, and we were taking in hides for our cargo, the sun beating down on our heads, so that you had to gasp with every breath. Stupid, foolhardy, with no knowledge of danger, because precautions interfered with my pleasure, I refused to take them ; and being struck down senseless was the penalty. It was then Henrik showed his devotion. He deserted from the ship rather than leave me, and sold and spent everything he had until he was left with not much more than the shirt on his back in his endeavours to pull me through. It was to his care I owed my life, and tears in great drops rolled down his cheeks the first time I was able to speak to him in my usual way. After I had once answered the helm, I went along with my head to wind, and was soon all right again ; but, with no respectable clothes and our money gone, the two of us had a roughish time. We were forced to work at whatever came to hand—from serving liquor at a bar, to doing the dirty bidding of a nigger-driver.

‘At last, through hanging about the port, we stumbled across a Norwegian whose ship hailed from Nieuwediep. Its captain was a Dutchman, and having listened to our story, which we told him truly, he believed us, advanced money for our clothes, and took us aboard with him, though she was a leaky old tub, and not the sort of craft we had been used to. Out of gratitude we stayed by her the whole trip, returned in her, and soon found our way back to Norway. I went home, but Henrik didn’t care to face his family, so we parted at Christiania, where he entered on board a coaster, and I soon after found a similar berth in another.

‘I was very well satisfied with my position ; but though we found opportunities to meet frequently, Henrik was discontented. He made a grievance that I did not care to be with him, and so constantly worried me, that at length one evening, when we had met at Stavanger and were ashore there, I gave him a promise

that I would look out for a foreign-going ship, in which we could again be together.

‘Delighted that he had gained his point, he became, for him, quite jovial. Nothing would do but we must have an extra glass to drink luck to the undertaking, and afterwards we strolled down to the landing-place and stood smoking.

‘On an evening like this I can always bring that long past one back to me. Again in my ears sounds that voice: I strain them to catch its melody.

“Listen!” I said to Henrik, “they are singing,” and I motioned him to go closer up to the house, through whose open windows the music reached us. Two persons were singing, the voices of a man and a woman; one of them played an accompaniment on a guitar. Even now I cannot tell what spell fascinated me, but after the song had stopped, I pushed Henrik away. “Wait,” I said, “perhaps she’ll sing again.” “There are two of them,” was his reply. There might have been a dozen, I listened but to one, the notes of a voice that had entranced me.

At twelve o’clock that night my vessel left Stavanger to continue on its journey, and as we slowly steamed away I fixed my eyes on the house, and made myself a promise that on our return I would find out who was the singer. But some months went by and I had not found my opportunity, though by that time I had contrived to pick out the air, all but two or three bars which always baffled me. One evening at Laurvig I had gone into the wood expecting to meet Henrik, whose vessel started from there. The townsfolk were flocking up to hear the band, I loitered among the trees expecting him to overtake me. Suddenly all the blood in my body rushed to my head—I heard the song, it was sung by the same singer. Half a dozen steps brought me close behind the group—three young girls; they were walking hand in hand together.

“Hush! Signe,” said one mischievously, “somebody is listening,” and turning they were brought face to face so close to me that we all burst out laughing. Among our class of life in this country our manners are free; those who have a fancy for each other need not be kept silent for lack of introduction. Within half an hour of that moment we were all the best friends. I had been told by them who they were, and in turn they knew what there was to hear about me. When the other two had paired off with young fellows whom we met on the way, I found courage—for I never felt so shy with any one before—to tell Signe how at Stavanger I had listened to her song, and how ever since it had haunted me.

Yes, she had but lately returned from Stavanger, where she had been staying with a friend; her home was Laurvig. She was an orphan, but her mother, just before dying, had married again, and she was given a home by her step-father. Talking earnestly together we soon lost her companions, and did not meet them again; as for poor Henrik, I had forgotten all about him.

'Well, that night, the forerunner of many others, left but one thought in my head—when, how, where, should I meet Signe? I loved her madly; the one question I was always asking myself was, "Did she love me?" Henrik, to whom I confided my fears, scoffed at my timidity. "Why don't you ask her?" he would say, roughly. I did not for answer tell him how often I had tried, but that the words seemed to choke me. And so time went on. I had to leave Laurvig—I came back; again I went away. Sometimes Henrik and I met, sometimes I missed him; when I did so the fault was mine. With Signe I wanted no other company.

'Falling in with him at Christiansand, he surprised me with the news that an offer had been made him of a good berth. A captain from Bergen, whom he knew, was going a voyage to Valparaiso, and if he liked to take it, the post of third mate would be given to him.

"Well, of course you'll go?"

"I should if they had room for two," he said, quietly.

"But come, old fellow—" I stopped, not quite knowing how to put what I wanted to say. My love for Signe had changed me completely, and I saw that I had no right to allow him to miss this chance, when I meant to seize the first opportunity. Knowing his temper I began speaking in a roundabout way; he anticipated me.

"I understand," he said. "You mean we needn't be so much together now? All right!" and he was turning away when he stopped. "Look here," he said, "do you care for the berth? If so, take it," and he wheeled himself round brusquely.

'But I was not going to let him part with me that way; for a whole hour I tried to win him to a happier humour, and in doing so opened out my heart and its desires, finally dealing a last fatal blow by saying, "If I took your offer it would be because of Signe."

"And it is because of her I make it to you."

"Ah!" I said, with a lover's stupidity; "at last you are beginning to like her, I know, for my sake." But he stopped what I was saying by shaking me off roughly.

“If it's settled that you'll go,” he said, “we'd best look up Jansen, and ask him if he'll take you.”

‘And the result of this visit was that a month later I. started for Valparaiso, the betrothed of Signe.’

II.

“NEVER try to light a flame near a mine of gunpowder.” Signe, with that desire for conquest which seems the thirst of woman's nature, although her heart was given to me, began striving to make Henrik her prisoner.

‘I was not without blame in this matter; for, seeing her interested, I had amused her by relating instances of his almost savage jealousy; and now, when ostensibly by virtue of his trust—for I begged him to be a brother to her—he, in hopes of finding an occasion for slander, dogged her footsteps and followed her everywhere, the thought came that she would try if she had the power to make him love.

‘People did not call Signe beautiful. I did not think her so myself, but her eyes, like her voice, haunted you. They were tender, deep, sad; they seemed to look down into your heart and leave their light there. Henrik always looked away from her; it is his habit, you know, more especially if he does not feel well disposed towards a person; and he hated Signe from his very soul, and, strange to say, quickly penetrated the game she was playing with him.

‘I, who have been given the confidences of the two, know the fight that went on between them. The lapse of years makes our judgment clearer, and, in full possession of the misery wrought, I still have pity for them. 'Tis said that hate and love often lie closer than we dream they do. One moment Henrik was my friend, the next every barrier was dashed down, and he had clasped Signe to his heart and called her his own.

‘Poor child! until that time the love permitted to meet her eyes had run as a placid stream. Suddenly a torrent had overwhelmed her, and by its force carried her breathless away. Fear of the giant she had called to life sealed her lips, stopped her heart—another time she would find courage. When he was gone she would think of what to say. But as a snake with a frightened bird so Henrik's power was cast over Signe. She was no longer mistress of herself; a nature stronger than she had dreamed of

held her at its mercy, and Henrik was mad; the love he now felt was a frenzy. Leave her! go, as I had done, for her to make a victim, and fall the prey, of some other? Sooner would he have carried out the temptation often present to his mind of jumping with her into the seething waters, and thus securing his possession for ever; and Signe dreamed as much, and the heart in which I still was imaged died away within her. Another influence, too, was brought to bear. Her step-father, desirous of getting married himself, urged Henrik's suit, and the unhappy one, not daring to confess the truth, that it was through her coquetry this savage love had been born, advanced fifty excuses, but never the right one. . . . They were married.

'I had been gone eighteen months, and, driven desperate that I had never been written to by either of them, I was preparing to leave my ship and get some berth in a homeward-bound one, when a former shipmate met me. He had a sister at Laurvig, and she had written to him.

"So you have lost your sweetheart," he said; "and a precious good riddance I should say, since she's taken up with Larsen."

"Larsen! Oh, has she?" Not I, but my lips were speaking: they were making a brave effort for me.

"My sister writes they're soon to be married, too."

'Did I answer? I don't know. The next thing I remembered I was far away out of the town, by myself—alone, where I could roll on the ground, tear up the earth, and call aloud, "Signe! Signe!"

'Alas, rage is very impotent, and when it is over there follows dumb misery, harder to bear because it must be hidden. I never doubted but what I had been told was true. In spite of the efforts I had made to cheat myself into a brighter mood, for months there had been hanging over me the certainty of coming evil; but not through Henrik. In my thousand speculations not a doubt of him had ever crossed my mind.

'Oh, Signe! I, who had been reckless and spendthrift, how I had saved and hoarded for you! There was a gay-coloured silk shawl, some flowers made from the feathers of birds, white coral, shells, a trinket or two, and the money I had put by. Twenty times I spread out all before me, asking myself "What shall I do with this—this, that was meant for her?" and I ended by making it into one parcel and writing on it Signe's name. And I looked about to find a ship going to Norway, and then I entrusted it to the keeping of some one who promised to have it safely delivered to her.

‘God help the man who is struck by such a blow when alone and friendless in a foreign land; if he is not to seek death he must find destruction.

‘I pass over the next four years of my life, to blot out which I would willingly forfeit half of that which remains to me.

‘I had long since left my ship and had entered on board a Chilian one trading between Valparaiso and Rio Janeiro. I was first mate of this vessel, and the crew, grown familiar with a recklessness which they called courage, all obeyed and most of them looked up to me. We were making for the port of Concepcion, some three hundred miles from Valparaiso. It was moderately fair weather, and we calculated that in another couple of days we should reach there; but the night set in cloudy, and in spite of there being a moon the darkness thickened round us. Gradually a heavy fog spread over and hung low on the water, hiding from our sight the silent and terrible rollers, the first warning of which was the fury of one breaking into the ship and drenching to the skin every soul on board her. Taken aback by the shock, had not the captain from experience been thoroughly familiar with the coast, our situation would have been an awkward one; as it was, we felt anything but secure until about ten on the following morning, when, the wind freshening a little, the haze cleared away and every man breathed more freely. There was nothing now to do but keep the vessel on her course. The captain went below, leaving the charge to me. Some time passed by, and then I believe—although I could never quite ascertain—some one went to rouse him.

‘He came on deck, to find that in his absence I had managed that the ship was being steered straight into land again. I don’t attempt to describe his anger. To estimate such an error one must be a seaman, and I had not a word to say in defence of a mistake which was inexplicable to myself.

‘He was still enlarging on the disaster which my carelessness—he would give no credit to my ignorance—might have led us into, when we were silenced by the cry of something in sight—a ship—and in distress, seemingly; and by the aid of the glass we could see, not far from a towering rock, a vessel which the terrible surf had carried over the shoal and half embedded in the sand. Into my mind leaped the thought that there was the solution of the puzzle—to get aid for these poor fellows was the reason I had blundered. If help was to be given I would give it. Only waiting until we got near enough to get a better view, I put

the question to the captain. "Yes, I could go if any of the rest would go with me." I asked them—made a sort of speech—and He whose hand must have ruled the helm helped me, so that with one voice they shouted "Yes."

"I must pick my crew," I said; and I singled out six men, and the rest helped us to get out the boat, and we started on our way while the captain brought the ship to lie-to as near as the breakers would permit.

'When reading of wrecks and the many men saved from them, I have asked myself how was it I could remember so little of that time of danger. Truly, I can only tell you that we reached the ship; that my first question was, had they any sick or hurt among them; if so, they must be lowered first, then the youngest and least experienced. The boat was thus filled. We left, reached our own ship, and with better heart than before set off back again for those who were waiting us. I had not left them without swearing a promise that not one should be left behind; but about halfway there came over us a dread that saps the courage of the stoutest sailor. Following us we perceived three sharks, and the men who had voluntarily braved the anger of the waves trembled in every limb at the sight of these monsters of the deep. There was a common pause. I pulled out the revolver I had with me and pointing said, "The first who stops pulling I shoot dead." My resolution steadied them; they gave way with all their strength, and the faint sound of a cheer told us how we were gaining ground.'

'Between fatigue, exposure, and the extra amount of drink they had taken, for, as far as I could guess, few among the crew were quite sober, the task of getting the men from off the ship was not an easy one. Floating timber, spars, rigging, threatened with each roller to swamp us, and by the time the last man was in the boat I felt pretty nigh exhausted. I made a pause while word was passed asking if they were all there. The captain, with several others, in trying to throw a line on to the rock had perished before we reached them. The answer came, "Yes;" but with it a doubt seized me. Stupefied as they seemed, could I trust them? Seizing my moment, I rushed forward. There at the door near the cabin a man was lying prostrate, his face hidden. "Dead drunk," I thought; and my hand was on him, when he sprang to his feet. It was Larsen. "Off with you; leave me," he cried savagely. "I'll not be beholden for life to you."

"Please yourself," I growled, turning away. "Take that to

Signe," and a canvas money-bag was thrown after me; "tell her if I forced her to marry me, it is by my own free act I make her a widow now."

"My heart gave a great leap, but the same instant I felt its bound make me a murderer. I took a step forward, and pointed my revolver so that its muzzle all but touched him.

"I won't leave you here living," I cried. "Come with me or I fire."

"Fire."

"His lips said the word—no sound escaped them. The effort he was making was greater than he had strength to endure, his face blanched as in death, his body fell together, he gave a stagger so that I caught him by the throat, dragged him along, and we stumbled and fell one on top of the other into the boat, where he lay senseless as a log. For a few minutes I was stunned, but quickly recovering we made all speed back to the ship, where, to the astonishment of all, I laid claim to Henrik. "I know him," I said. "I'll look after him; help me to take him to my cabin."

"The history of the ill-fated ship we had rescued these men from was one that is very common. She was bound from Rio with a heavy cargo, taken hastily on board and clumsily stowed by a crew made up of men of all nations. The captain who had lost his life, judging from the report given, was a brave fellow, but unable to maintain discipline. At the first show of danger there had been a general rush to the spirit-store, which, although guarded by Larsen—whom they described as a Northman who had only joined lately—they forced, and drank until there was not a sober one left among them. Many were hurt and needed looking after. We had no doctor; the sole charge of Larsen was handed over to me. I need not enter into the details of his illness—a fever with great brain disorder, haunted and tortured by images of Signe and of me. Long before the moment when, reason suddenly returning so that he believed he was dying and wished to make a clean breast of it, I was in possession of how he had sinned and how they both had suffered; the reproaches she had heaped on him, the love she had withheld from him, the ever-gnawing agony of the demon jealousy. At length it became insupportable, and after a terrible scene he had left her, vowing that until he found death he would keep away. His object in getting to Rio was to be somewhere near me, so that through him word might reach me whenever Signe should be free to marry. When it comes to holding converse under the shadow of death, we go

very straight to the point, and that day, when, worn out with much speaking, Henrik let himself fall back, to take, as he believed, his last sleep, not a trace of anger was left between us; no forgiveness had been asked, no repentance spoken of, but this full confession was accepted as freely as it was given.

‘Well, you know, he recovered; in my turn I brought him back to life, and more, I sent him back to Signe. God is my witness that from that time I believe not a thought of jealousy existed between us. With a heart brimming over with satisfaction, I saw him set sail in the ship that was to carry him to Norway and to her. And from that hour, as if I had awakened from a hideous nightmare, I was a new being. At least I had never been wholly a bad fellow, and much of the folly I had plunged into, instead of distracting, disgusted me. By degrees my lost good temper, even my cheerfulness, came back, and by the time a year had passed I was cherishing thoughts of again seeing my home. It was true that at Bergen there was no good old mother to return to, but my sisters and brothers still were there. In the letter Henrik had sent me after his arrival, he told me he had seen them, for he had been to Bergen to claim some money which, by the death of his father during his absence, had come to him. With it he meant to buy a share in a ship, of which he would be captain; and his only direct mention of Signe was, that when he again went to sea she wished to go with him. That seemed to speak well for their reconciliation. After that I heard no more from Henrik.

‘I waited until the following spring before I left my ship, and then there was some delay in hearing of a homeward-bound one. Going down to the port one evening I met a friend.

“‘I’ve just left some one inquiring after you,” he said. “Larsen, the fellow who we all thought was going to die, you know.”

“‘Larsen! he here—what’s he doing?”

“‘He’s captain of a ship; he’s got a share in her. They’ve come from Monte Video with hides, I hear.”

‘After that I was not long in meeting Henrik, who was ashore searching for me.

“‘Signe is with me,” he said; “she wants to see you.” I suppose I seemed to hesitate, for as if to urge me he added, “her health hasn’t been good since her baby died. You won’t refuse her?”

“‘Oh no.” I wished though, all the same, that I could think of some excuse why I should not go. I did not want to have the flavour of this bygone history raked up again. The Signe, she

whom I had loved, was dead—this one was now nothing but Henrik's wife to me. We got into a boat, and as we neared where the ship lay, Henrik broke into the midst of something I was telling him by saying, "You mustn't think her ill; she'll soon be better now—she only looks thin."

'Thin! This ghost, this shadow, with only the eyes left to remind me. Could it be Signe?—the Signe I had loved; the Signe I now knew had loved me!

'Forgetting everything else, I flung myself down before her, and the tears poured from my eyes like water. I believe that not one of the three but knew what caused this outburst of sorrow, although each gave a different reason.

'You guess, don't you, that seeing they wished it, I joined them. Henrik was all anxiety to return home. In his opinion the sea did not agree with Signe. The weather, too, had set in warm; and heat, he said, always tried her. Alas! poor fellow, how pitiful were the poor devices he tried to veil the truth with!

'That Signe was dying those who looked at her could not doubt; but to Henrik no one had ever dared to hint as much. Lose her now, just when he had gained her love? Fate could not be so cruel to him. So to me it was that Signe spoke openly, freely conversing of that time when she would no longer be with us. The hope of seeing Henrik and me reconciled to each other had been the strongest motive for her coming so far, and in the solemn talks we had together the sad past was laid bare.

'Henrik and I had so arranged our ship duties that it was not possible for us to be together with Signe; and both of us now felt this a relief. Daily she had grown weaker: she was not able to rise from her bed now. Every motion of the ship gave her such distress that, anxious as we were to get on, we had to lower the sails to stop the rolling. I think, at this time, his bitterest enemy must have felt compassion for Henrik. The unhappy fellow neither ate nor slept. Not a moment's rest did he give himself. Every one could see the agony he suffered; and yet, in face of what was before him, he spoke as if there was still hope for Signe. We had on board with us one of those books about medicines which captains of vessels take to sea with them. In this he was for ever searching for some fresh remedy; and because I would entreat him to let her be, he would turn fiercely on me, saying I did not care whether she was well or ill. What mattered it to me?

'One evening as I sat by Signe's side watching—for she had

hardly moved or spoken that day—suddenly her hands were stretched out. I turned and, looking on her face, I knew the moment of parting had come. Henrik! how should I get him? I dare not call his name for fear I might disturb her.

“Signe!” I whispered; “Signe, do you know me?” and I bent my face down to her, and the half-closed lids gave a quiver, and then the eyes opened, but not to look at me. The light that came into them was fixed above. A radiance spread over her face, and before its brightness faded the spirit of Signe had passed away.

“Henrik!” I said, going on deck to him; but before I could add more, at sight of my face he pushed past me, and was down in the cabin. At the threshold I caught hold of him. “Nothing is of any more good now,” I sobbed. “In an instant, without a struggle, before I could call you, it was all over. She did not speak. I don’t know if she knew me.”

‘I fancied this might calm him; but he flung himself forward, and, catching her in his arms, poured out a torrent of reproach on me. I had neglected her. Fool that I was, she had but fainted; it was a swoon! Hadn’t I eyes? Could I not see? And he began rubbing her forehead, chafing her hands, calling on every one he could think of to help him. He would have the whole crew down to try and bring back the circulation of her blood. Life had often been restored—after hours he had seen people brought in as dead breathe and move and speak again. So to humour him—for they looked on him as mad—the men came and spent hours in their vain endeavour; and then one by one they stole away, and the poor stricken soul was left alone with her he loved.

‘After that night Henrik allowed me to have my will. There was but one order he gave. Signe’s body was to be carried with us to land; and then he shut himself up in the cabin where she had lain so long and paid no more heed to anything going on around. What would have happened to the ship had I not been on board her I cannot think. Possibly he might have roused himself; I do not know. As it was, unless to take sufficient food to keep himself alive, he neither moved nor spoke.

‘You know full well, I dare say, that sailors are counted very superstitious among men. Their solitary lives feed the imagination, so that they tack their faith to dreams, omens, and apparitions. Presently it became fore-castle talk that among those

I had seen the ghost of Signe. It was a sign, they said. It was not at rest, and unless her body was given up, the terrible disaster would most certainly overtake us. To calm these rumours, did I tell them that though, each going to see that all was safe, I often stood for hours by the coffin's side, never once had she appeared to me. My words had no weight. Our carpenter lay sick; our boy, a favourite among the crew, fell overboard; the murmurs which until now had been but the rumble of a distant thunder, became distinct and audible, until I was told that no man had engaged with me; I was not the captain there, and unless what they demanded was carried out, they refused any longer to obey. Nothing remained but to tell Henrik, and one evening I went to his cabin, and, without preamble, repeated to him what the crew had bid me say. "So we must bury her," I added stolidly; for since she died no word of friendship or of sympathy had been exchanged between us two; "I have made all ready; no one will disturb us. Come with me." And together we went.

The moon shed its light over the water; a myriad stars lit up the sky; reverently we lifted our burden, and then slowly lowered it down to the sea. Oh, the agony of that moment, when each waited for the other to let go! The hesitation passed swift as a flash of lightning; there was a splash; a cry wrung from the inmost souls of two men, whose eyes met, as they raised their bent heads, and sobbing fell each on the other's neck.

Well, from that day Henrik and I have never crossed an angry look or word. We reached home in due time, but between one thing and the other, the cargo being next to spoilt, the ship out of repair, all the money he had left him besides that which I had saved was gone. There were berths in plenty open to me, but nothing for him; the sorrow that had tried him so sorely had turned him into an old man, more feeble and bent down than you now see him. For me to leave him would, I saw, be worse than his death-blow; it would cost him his mind. So that when through old Jacob Anders dying the Folgernaes wanted fresh hands, heartily I thanked Heaven for giving us this opening. I am very well off here, more contented than half the people you meet; and as for Henrik, only one place in his eyes will be better, and that is, if ever we should get aloft, there to live, and never again part from Signe.'

‘*The Jessamy Bride.*’

(A PORTRAIT OF MRS. GLYN, *née* HORNECK.)

‘ There was Kauffman beside,
And the *Jessamy* Bride.’

‘ **A**ND you went once with myrtle crowned !’
You once were she, for whom
Poor GOLDSMITH’S gentle genius found
That name of jasmine-bloom !

How strange it seems ! You whom he loved,
You who were breathing,—vital,—
Not feigned in books,—for us have proved
Scarce but a fragrant title ;—

A shape too shadowy far to stand
Beside the girl Primroses,—
Beside the dear old Vicar, and
Our more-than-brother, Moses !

We cannot guess your voice, who know
Scamp Tony’s view-halloo ;
For us e’en thin Beau Tibbs must show
More palpable than you !—

Yet some scant news we have. You came,
When that kind soul had fled ;
You begged his hair ; you kept his name
Long on your lips, ’tis said ;

You lived ;—and died. Or when, or how,
Who asks ! This age of ours
But marks your grass-grown headstone now
By GOLDSMITH’S jasmine flowers !

AUSTIN DOBSON.

The Lothian Hinds.

WHERE can be seen a stronger, more active, or more ruddy manhood than that of the Lothian hinds? It would be difficult to find a better class of peasantry. Time never dwarfs them. They are the backbone, the sinew of the success of the Lothian farmers. They are steady, intelligent, well-housed, well-dressed, well-fed, skilled workmen. Better ploughmen do not exist anywhere, I am bold to say, nor a sturdier set of men than these true Saxons. Hind¹ is a Saxon name with an old-world flavour; elsewhere it has nearly fallen into disuse, but here it lingers, and is dignified by the exemplary race, the ancient stigma attaching to it having been almost outlived. The word never occurs in our translation of the Bible; and though Shakespeare frequently uses it, it is always in contempt towards lack-brained peasants. His characters play upon the words, the veriest hind, shallow, cowardly, rude, unpolished, ragged multitude, rebellious and knavish; phrases which have a deeper historical meaning than we pause to consider, but are inapplicable to the Lothian hinds. Speaking by the book, hinds are unpolished still, but the other adjectives of accusation drop to the ground. What farmers want between the plough-stilts are a pair of strong arms, quiet steady eyes following with gladness the ploughshare, and the easy movements of two willing horses, which are his delight. Unpolished is a comparative word, and is out of place when applied to a hind or to a shepherd. That alone is beauty which is appropriate and in its place. One should not go to his grave without finding out the ordinary courtesy and frank kindness which characterise our hinds and coalheavers. There are peasant men and women who possess the gentle spirit in as marked a degree as the best lady in the land or the lord in his garter, and who in delicate touches of their own create an economy of unspoken manners. Driving a pair of well-bred deep-eyed horses all the year round gives the youngest hind good feelings and a joy in life. It

¹ Farm servants are ordinarily called hinds in East and Mid Lothian; in West the word is but seldom heard, and never seems to have been common, though 'double hinding' is freely used,

is a fundamental law of nature as it is of art that labour adds to beauty, and whoever is handy is handsome. It is beauty to do the work we are meant for and trained to do, and beauty is expression appropriate to work. The slow trailing movement of a hind guiding the plough would probably anywhere else look loutish, but behind the plough and the horses it is appropriate, and beautiful in being natural. The roughest work he puts his horny hands to, even emptying the cattle-courts of the dung in autumn, never is vulgar or coarse, because of the naturalness, the surroundings of field or farmstead, and the sweet rusticity that gathers about the labour. Even in speech he is never vulgar, however rude he may be. 'Ah! but,' you exclaim, 'how very dull, how very plain they are and the lives they lead!' The hinds actually live and work and have a stake in life; they have cares in the seasons and deep interest in the weather. You walk about life and avoid the realities; they live in the very thick of it; without bating a jot they are in the midst of that life below the eternal canopy which nourishes and soothes on farms and fields. They have no time for anything but their work, or at nights cobbling their boots, or tilling their own few yards of garden ground, or walking into the next parish in starlight on a love enterprise.

Their economy forms an interesting chapter. Hinds have grades in the social scale as well as in the scale of remuneration. The highest is the farm 'grieve,'¹ or overseer, who gets about 1*l.* per week of money, and in kind a free house and garden; sometimes he gets less money wages, and in kind the liberty to keep a cow and a sow, with bedding free, five bolls of potatoes from the barn floor or a thousand yards in the field, he supplying the seed, sixty-five stones of oatmeal, and an extra boll of wheat for stacking the grain at harvest. The payments in kind he calls his 'gains.' Every one is not able to build the stacks neatly and well, and to roof them with straw, so a good stacker receives a little extra wage. The foreman hind, who 'yokes' and 'unyokes' the other hinds, and has the charge of them, receives about 25*l.* per year and the same payment in kind, save that he is not generally allowed to keep a cow. The ordinary hind gets about from 1*l.* to 2*l.* less money wages; and in East Lothian all hinds, roughly speaking, are allowed to keep pigs. The spade hind, or 'orra' man, who does odd jobs and can take a hind's place in case of sickness, receives about the same wages. The cattle or 'nowt,'

¹ This Lowland Scotch word is curiously interesting. The sheriff, or highest county official, is really the shire grieve; and the county is a grieveship.

man (*i.e.* neat man) receives about twelve or thirteen shillings per week, and some bolls of potatoes. All get free cottages and 'kail yards,'¹ and get their coals driven free. For four weeks during the harvest they get the ordinary harvest food free—to wit, a bicker of oatmeal porridge and milk morning and night, and a large 'shearer' roll and a bottle of harvest ale at midday, driven to the fields in the porridge cart. The farm women, or 'out by,' workers—who are also engaged by the year, and work on the fields all the year round at seed, hay, and harvest times, who thin the turnips, lift and pit the potatoes, spread the manure before ploughing, assist at threshing and work in the granaries—receive about fifteen pence a day, two bolls of potatoes from the fields, and a small donation at harvest, besides the usual harvest meat. They are hinds' daughters, or Highland women, who live together in a free cottage, or Irishwomen who trudge morning and night from the nearest town or village. When the hay or the grain is being gathered or 'led in' to the stack yard, the hinds generally get some refreshments as encouragement to working overtime at these critical seasons. They are allowed a few pence for refreshments, or 'mags,' when away a distance—at the station, coal pit, or market—and so cannot get home to dinner. Their longest drive is to Edinburgh with high-heaped cart loads of hay, when they may be a night and a day absent. At one time all hinds in East Lothian were allowed to keep a cow, but from various causes the privilege is fast becoming a thing of the past, and is now almost confined to the grieves. It is interesting to note, as customs rise and expire in waves, that the privilege of keeping a cow and a sow has long been taken from the uncomplaining hinds in Mid and West Lothian, where it is now entirely unknown. The hind's cow, like the shepherd's ewe, was proverbially always in fine condition. The farmer provides grazing in summer, and fodder in winter, for which 8*l.*, formerly 5*l.*, are deducted from the hind's wages. Some years ago cottagers here and there had to 'shear' for their cottage, *i.e.* to work during harvest time in exchange for a free cottage. Even yet hinds' wives are sometimes taken bound to assist any busy day. It was a custom, and exists to a very trifling extent, for married hinds to keep in their family a female field-worker, known as a bondager. It was cruel and oppressive to thrust a strange young woman into a hind's house, which then, and here and there yet, consisted of a 'but' and a

¹ Small plots of garden ground.

'ben,' the cottage being divided into two small apartments by the box-beds erected in a line. Gradually the hinds resented this cruel intrusion. The custom arose from the fact that certain cottages on the farm had to produce so many field-workers, and if the hind had no sons or daughters, he had to supply their place somehow. The bothie system for men is dead; it never existed to any extent. The Lothian farmers encourage hinds to marry; and while in many parts of Scotland where the bothie system prevails, marriage means to ploughmen notice to quit, in the Lothians their prospects become better. A double hinding, *i.e.* where a father and son earn two hind's wages for two or double hind's work, is much prized; the family then gathers some silver, and opens an account with the bank. It is wonderful, bankers tell me, the amount some hinds have deposited in their own and their wives' joint names. They are a thrifty, deserving class, and not discontented. Such industrious ploughmen would soon reform any discontented country into a peaceful and prosperous land.

No doubt, like all country folk, their life is one continuous routine; but no class travel less and know so much, no class have so few holidays and are so contented. Their skill and trustworthiness are the best support of the ability and enterprise of the Lothian farmers. They toil early and late in snow and rain, and trudge on Saturday nights to the village for provisions, when the village breaks out in an eruption of bundles and baskets. They have a double toil—toil to earn and toil to spend. Not given to agitation they receive good wages and good cottages; not given to religious excitement they take moderate views, and religious revivals never take root. When John Wesley preached at East Linton he was astonished at the absence of any visible effect, and to see the people quietly listen and quietly disperse. The memorable Disruption took few away from the Old Kirk. Hinds have hardly been known to be poachers or pilferers, and they seldom become paupers.

When the great shadows fall in the plains and God lays His hand on the hind's life, all the joy they know, apart from the pride in their work, is to lay some scanty savings by for their children, whom they long to see removed from their lower order. For this end the wife will rise while the stars burn, and with pillow-slip in hand will gather the mushrooms that have grown with the night. Then she makes wholesome ketchup and turns it into cash. It is an exciting time at Martinmas when the neighbours lean over the sow's 'cruive' or sty, and make trifling bets

about its weight. At the sow-sticking, a great event, the neighbours lend helping hands, and there is generally a glass of whisky going. Large parts of the sow are pickled in salt in a barrel and hung up on hooks in the roof to dry. So long as a bit of fat pork is in the house, potatoes in the garden, and scones in the pantry, the hinds never want for a good dinner. But the cow almost keeps the house, and she is insured in a hind's club or cow 'box.' She is one of themselves, a bread-winner—indeed, she butters their coarse bread. 'Lady,' 'Daisy,' or 'Nanny' is spoken of at the fireside as if she were a daughter. And it is a sight to see the hind's one cow tied to the cart containing their furniture, at flitting or removing day, in the street of the town they pass through, milked by an innkeeper's wife, a farm grieve's daughter. A hind's wife parts with her cow only on extreme occasions, and then with great regret. I have known the cow sold to buy a son out of the army, to start another in business, or to give a daughter suitable providing on her marriage to a town tradesman. Even then the wife would as soon part with her right hand. To see the wife, with pitcher in one hand, and a piece of bread for the cow in the other hand, standing on the field-slope, crying 'P'tru, Lady,' with a love-tone, as if she were calling on her bairn, and dressed in linsey-woolsey, stately and calmly milking the red and white Ayrshire cow, is to remember for ever the homeliest field-picture, a scene full of the northern grey serenity. She milks as earnestly as if it were a religious act. The tournure of the elbows is as shapely as a marble cast; and you see beauty of the very highest in the middle-aged woman milking for those that are dearer to her than life—her bairns. In the bend of the body and droop of the head there is a homely earnestness. And in the stolid fixedness of the cow, which turns her glossy neck, as she looks with deep brown eyes upon the well-known figure, you can read the look of gladness. The cow seems almost conscious of its value to the poor hinds, and returns the wife's kindly feeling by sometimes licking her mistress all over. It is a proverb with the hinds, used to characterise a woman who has not a stout heart or a firm will, 'She aye flings away the pail when the cow flings.' 'If I were dead,' an old farmer in the Fentons was fond of saying, 'I would like to come back again to this world in the shape of a hind's cow. They are the best done to in the world.'

All along the Tyne, the Esk, and the Almond, the soil is rich; but none in the British isles is richer than that red soil on the high table-land above the scarped red cliffs to the east and west

of Dunbar. All along the sea-coast the sea-fowls fly, and hover far inland about the hinds' feet; they taught those inland what wealth might be found in the fruits of the sea. It is a race with the hinds who is to be first at the shore in the early morning, down the cliffs with trace horses and carts for the sea-ware to manure the fields; and there are stories within the memory of old women how some carts top-heavy sank in the sands, and the incoming tide rushed up and drowned men and horses.

The hinds struggle against the rough realities of rustic life, though the farmers count them happy, as they have no rents or taxes to pay. The black coats and the white spotted vests they were married in serve them their lifetimes. Manfully they struggle to give their children a fair education—the compulsory clause is not required for them. They suffer severely when, as now frequently happens, the potatoes are diseased—potatoes being a staple article of food. More severely do they suffer when their sow or cow ails and dies. It is a great affront or slight not to be spoken to at 'speaking-time' for re-engagement, or for a son to enlist into the army or become a policeman. They only take the Queen's shilling when tipsy at the hiring-fair, and an English recruiting-sergeant, another Kite, cajoles them with the bombast that soldiers sleep in beds of honour, or when they get themselves into scrapes with lasses and cowardly run away and enlist.

Setting aside for the moment the poetry that surrounds the mystery and beauty of human life and human love everywhere under the sun, there is poetry and to spare in the Lothian hinds. The wonder is that no singer has had his eyes directed thither in the search for something new. There are folk lore, old mythology, and superstitious beliefs lying thickly about that would reward any man for six months' life among them. The Lothians are the northern Lincolnshire. It pleases the humour of the day to find poetry only in what is simple in the lives of crofters or peasant farmers fighting the world and nature single-handed. But without a doubt there is poetry in the Lothian big farmsteads, the large red-tiled cattle-courts, granaries, high brick chimney-stalk, the hinds' cottages in a row, the doorways and windows coloured with yellow or blue or pink ochre, roofs, red-tiled and tinted with weather-stained colours, and covered with green ivy here and there, topaz yellow, olive grey and citron brown, and fronted with flower-pots, and backed with kitchen gardens; poetry in the ceaseless round of activity of the numerous farm-labourers, and the quiet lives of the widow out-worker and her brown-faced daughter, who

sometimes use no other table than their hands, and are called to work in the grey wintry morning at the horn's blast; poetry in the patient, easy-minded, ruddy drivers sitting atop the grain sacks on the one-horse cart going to market, in the cattle man's life among the red and white oxen, whose figure is bent as if he always had a barrow of turnips wheeling; and poetry in the bare but homely interiors, where potatoes lie beneath box-beds, where sixpenny photographs are on the whitewashed walls, and drinking-water from the field spring is in an earthenware jar behind the outer door, in these stern hinds' cottages, that look as if they were stranded on peaceful fields in the rushing irresistible tide towards towns and cities.

Hinds have the true ancient lineage. 'The real old families,' exclaimed Mr. Millbank in *Coningsby*, 'are to be had among the peasantry. I never heard of a peer with an ancient lineage.' In a corner cupboard they can show ancient china cups and saucers. They possess old family Bibles which have served three generations. Their life is a life-drama full of listless longings, which send some of their sons and daughters into the towns with dreaming thoughts. They are not fairy-land folk, but somewhat slow and heavy; they are friends of leisure and silence. They labour, and perish like the grain; they are patient workers and have no time to mourn amid the trials, toils, and troubles which hover about farms and fields and poor folk. To the poetic eye they seem to work as if under an irrevocable sentence of hard labour; but those homely hinds give us the sweet landscapes with their rustic lives about the granges and 'mains,' and the russet stacks above the red tiles and sable thatch. Like all genuine country folk they retain the deepest impressions of most trivial things. Their lovemaking and long night love journeys are full of tender incidents—there's a road in every parish where they walk, and cross roads where they meet, which are avoided by their elders. A friend or neighbour visiting them has to be 'set on the road' or 'convoyed' home a bit, when the news nearest the heart are told. It is the everlasting charm of open-air labour that gives them beauty, the calmness and patience about slow growth on the fields that gives them, when ploughing, a dignity equal to Hellas bearing the urn. It is an abiding pastoral to see them lying elbow deep in golden sheaves and poppies with their hands bent loosely round their upturned knees. With treadmill regularity they follow the seasons and never wish to overtake them. When thronging in the town on the hiring fair, with rough manners and

plain speech, you might think their minds had not yet received the rebound from their former serfage. In their sulky altercations and their drunken squabbles they know no manners, no masculine or feminine system of graces. On being spoken to by their superiors they will reply with awkward movements and awkward speech, and never for a moment think of touching their hats, or of taking the pipes out of their mouths, or their hands out of their pockets. Shyly they turn their heads aside to escape recognition, and at nights generally thrust their hands out of sight, never dreaming of the might that slumbers in their arms. They never become farmers, and never desire to do so. Unlike the Cheviot shepherds, their sons never become clergymen or teachers. This thrifty, intelligent class is far from being moved by excitement, one point they have in common with the owlsh, grey and quaint Northamptonshire labourers; and about the keenest feeling they know is on Saturday nights when their weekly toil comes to a close, and wearily along the bye-roads they homeward wend. They are a class that read the *Weekly Scotsman* and a local paper, and receive from the post-runner letters from sons and daughters in towns or abroad.

They are a wonderfully cheery race, and whistle with the best. Along the clean, grassless high roads the one-horse carts rumble homewards from the side stations, loaded with phosphate, guano, and crushed bones, or go to the station with bag-loads of grain to be delivered, or to the Firth's rocky harbours with bags of potatoes for the London and foreign sloops. It is then the sturdy hinds and stripling lads, in the enjoyment of vigorous health, or when returning from suppering the horses to their cottages, make the roads short with the lilting tunes they cheerily whistle as no other mortals can. The hind's whistle is the finest country music that can be desired. It is clear as a bugle and cheery as a reel. It is associated with hedgerows, field furrows, fine stepping horses, ruddy faces, and swinging gaits. Listen! their hearts are in their throats, and their tongues are flexible as a bird's. You stand stock still in astonishment, and ask: Where on earth have they learned the tunes, the country flourishes, the country time? No school teaches them, and the rich roundness of the music is unknown to the butcher's boy or to your whistling maid. How old, and sweet, and hearty are the tunes! Quietness and nature's voices are their silent teachers. It is high time these old tunes were collected.

On Sundays they regularly attend the parish kirk, and pretty

regularly spread their arms over the backs of the pews and fall asleep as the minister reaches the first head of the sermon, and waken up with their locks about their eyes at the silence of the preacher's voice after 'Amen.' With a pinch of snuff they become wide awake. They have their clay pipes lit the moment they reach the kirk porch. On Sundays they dress in good broad-cloth or comfortable tweeds, with silver watch-chains swinging across their waistcoats. Elsewhere they would pass for tradesmen or yeomen. In the afternoons or evenings the main roads about Phantassie move with the young hinds, who, having seen sufficient of fields and farms during the working days, throng in pairs with the tall, well-dressed hinds' daughters. Next to the meeting and gossip at the kirkyard, it is the freshest sight in the day. The kirk and market are yet the only two places where they can gather and exchange that gossipy information which circulates, as they phrase it, 'by word of mouth.' A man may well sing their praises—these ruddy-faced, well-built men enjoy the quietude of comfortable homes; their sweet homeliness can hardly be excelled.

It is an excellent feature in these hinds, who are never poverty-stricken, and have always a suit of clothes for Sunday, that they are fond of the strong Clydesdale horses they drive. Heavy horses are required for the heavy red soil. There is a pleasant rivalry among them as to who will keep horses and harness in trimmest condition, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals needs no agent here: they strive to keep them over- rather than under-fed. When being engaged at the hiring fair they invariably ask about the horses they are to work with, and stipulate for being allowed materials to dress and polish their horses and harness, so that at market they may make an appearance alongside the neighbouring rows. Bits of bright-coloured ribbons and tapes are wrought into the horses' manes and forelocks, a country flower is stuck into the collar, while a small brass bell keeps turning round above the horses' shoulders every step they take. If you follow them into the public-house box, where they sit with pocket-knives cutting penny rolls and drinking bottles of sweet ale, their 'mags,' you can hear their broad thick words about their horses, and about topping the market with the grain. These are the subjects to boast of on market days.

Does any divinity stir within them? Look at the teamsters, cries the shrill voice of the idealist, wending their way to market; their highest duty is to fodder and water their horses! Their deity is a comfortable meal and a good 'hinding.' They are

'our conscripts on whom our lot fell.' To the toil-worn hinds, who conquer the earth more than themselves, and who enjoy rude intelligence beneath the hard faces, the highest duty and divinity is, as it is to us all, to do the work they have on hand. To drive mercifully and well a pair of silent, willing horses to the market is, for the time being, the hind's highest and only duty; and there is almost a divinity in driving a pair of deep-eyed deep-chested horses. What would you have them do? Some men who think only fools and horses work, would have them write verse atop the grain sacks, let the horses saunter, and arrive too late for the week's market.

The weekly grain market at Haddington during the winter months is characteristic of East Lothian, and cannot be equalled for the turn-out of hinds and one-horse grain carts opposite the Corn Exchange. A hind drives two carts, the rope reins of the rear horse being thrown over the front cart on which the driver sits. Here is a splendid collection of strong hinds, dressed in clean corduroy, stripped to the sleeved waistcoats, carrying on bended backs the sackloads, the sample bags, to the Exchange from their carts, and big prancing horses with polished brasses, blackened and shining harness, bits of ribbons, and bits of wheat-straw plaited in the tail and mane. Who cannot but admire the strong horses trooping up the High Street causeway at full walking speed, and the hinds, with cheering cries, and, from high spirits, making their whips play crack about the leaders' tossing heads and ears? It is their parade-ground. The whip-cracks make the horses in the heavy-loaded cart carry their heads well and throw out their knees. The little bell on the collar tinkles the quicker with every toss of the head. The hinds' faces are ruddy with delight as they handle their decorated whips, and the willing horses walk boldly into the full gaze of the market-square. The quick, thundering noise of the loaded carts on the stony streets shakes the strong-built houses. This is a sight only now to be seen at Haddington in winter, the grain market at Dalkeith having fallen terribly away. The day is looked forward to by the lads, and the night previous they give extra attention to both horses and harness. On returning home on market nights the young bloods are fond of racing their horses in the empty carts, and occasionally they are prosecuted before the justices for furious driving or driving on the footpath. A notice published in the local Eastern papers shows when the last carts unloaded and left the railway station, so that a check may be put on their tarrying at the public-house.

The day of the year is the hiring fair. Hinds travel long distances to the fair. To the Haddington fair, which is probably the largest, hinds come from far and near, and are sometimes on the road the night before. There they see old and well-known faces, and chat over a gill of whisky the fortunes and failures of the year and the day. Several thousands, and as many women as men, move about cracking rude rustic jokes, the young lads swagger canes bought at the fair, with pieces of ribbon frequently flying from the left of their low-crowned cloth caps. Their corduroy trousers fit tightly at the knees, and, along with the long-bodied waistcoats, are adorned with some mother-o'-pearl buttons. No mark distinguishes those who are, from those who are not, hired. One must use his tongue, and this day the hind makes it wag in all conscience. He speaks and shouts as if he were in a forty-acre field. The day's liberty and the sight of so many faces intoxicate him. The majority come to see the fair; it is a holiday for miles around; and the lasses get their 'fairing' from the lads in gingerbread and nuts from the stalls. This day the hinds purchase their valentines, not grudging half-a-crown for one in a box, and addressed, into the bargain, to the lass they like best. Well-dressed country folk stand and move on the streets in surging throngs, seeing and being seen, waiting to be hired for the year, to get 'arles'—the usual shilling—and to sign a scrawl in the nearest public-house. It is a strange, memorable sight. There are the usual Bohemian vagabonds, and it is wonderful how these illiterate folk remember the fairs so well, as the birds do the seasons. There are Cheap John, the auctioneer, who returns your shilling with goods in a present, travelling photographers, merry-go-rounds, the man who sells a straw and gives the book for nothing, games of roly-polly, the thimbles and pea trick, prick the garter, ballad singers, the giant and the fat woman, Punch and Judy, and all those motley-witted tramps that amuse the rustic minds with volleys of words and sleight of hand. Then ensues not unfrequently, as by a law of nature, the wild excess after noiseless months. The hinds, if 'unfit for raptures,' find 'raptures cheer' on this 'high festival of once a year.' Philanthropists want this custom abolished; reformed it may be, but abolished never; no more than gas-light theorists can take from out the rustic heart the craving for a holiday among streets of human faces.

Hinds preserve our old stock of words and observe the old holidays and customs. They conserve what is admirable. Their

holidays are Auld Handsel Monday, the Hiring Fair, the Agricultural Show, the Yeomanry Races, or the Carters' Play or Race day, when their love for finery is whetted. The Carters' or Whipmen's Play is almost extinct; it was the occasion of a procession of carters and ploughmen who were members of the Carters' Friendly, Sick, and Funeral Society, and who, mounted and bedecked, gathered in the morning at the house of the chairman. Then they marched as orderly and as imposingly as they could on restive horses along the high road to the sea links, where they raced their horses. The prizes, which were always pieces of harness, were distributed by the preses commonly styled 'Duke, my Lord.' Many sad plights, humorous scenes, and tragic episodes occurred then. An old hind, for example, was suddenly called on in his cups to 'yoke' a horse; but in place of the stable, he entered the byre, and saddled a cow. And again, a young hind, having got a loan of his master's horse with the caution on no account to run, could not resist the temptation to take part in a race, and when coming in first in full glory, ran up against the projecting 'trams' of a cart, and destroyed the horse. The lad, not possessing the courage to face his master with the sad tale, fled and enlisted. Auld Handsel Monday¹ survives in the East county only. It is the hinds' Christmas day, and is held on the second Monday of the year, when the sons and daughters and grandchildren all make for the old home in carts, sitting on bags of straw, and taking handsels or gifts with them. It is the day of the family reunions, when the family council is again heard around the fireside. New Year's and Christmas days are gradually being observed, but they do not bring to the Lothian hinds the old family associations that linger about Auld Handsel Monday, when in the villages athletic sports and ball-shooting with ordinary guns are held, and a subscription book goes round to purchase legs of mutton, pounds of sugar and tea, 'shortbread,' currant buns (*i.e.* rich fruit-cakes, about two-thirds compound of currants and raisins), and bottles of whisky, for prizes to the competitors, who sit on chairs and fire at wooden marks. To the Yeomanry races the lads and lasses and old hinds—who call fleet horses 'trip-the-daisy'—driving tandem, ride in the long hay-carts, the sides being covered with plaited straws for seats. They select the finest pair of horses from the farm-stable, and gaily decorate them with flowing ribbons and arches of flowers. As a phaeton or waggonette passes them at the trot cheers come from their holiday throats, and the lasses

¹ It was the immemorial custom for servants to receive handsel or first gifts of the year on this day, and for the family to make merry.

rise up and wave their handkerchiefs, and the young hind makes his whip-play crack like a pistol about the prancing leader's ears. The sight would put spirit into the dullest mortal. The oldest rustic festival here is the harvest home, or 'Kirn,'¹ where once a year master and servant dance together to the tune of a violin, a flute, or a concertina. It is preceded by a supper in the granary—a long loft, lit up with candles, and deals placed on sack rows of grain for seats. It is a thoroughly rustic and poetic scene. Very old tunes, such as 'The wind that shakes the barley,' are brought to life again, and old wayward songs, such as 'On Sundays when I gang to Kirk,' are sung. From the last cuttings of the oats a nimble-fingered lass makes what is called the 'Kirn baby,' or the 'Kirn maiden'—a rough imitation with plaited oat stalks of an infant, the oat-heads being, as it were, the fringe of the petticoat, and beautifully decked up with silver paper, coloured ribbons, and poppies. Placed under the centre of the circle of candles, it does the same duty as the Christmas mistletoe. And it is a beautiful old belief that so long as one hangs the Kirn baby on his walls he will never want for oatmeal, and his coffers will never be empty. It is a fashion, a kindly custom, with the strong farm lasses in the harvest field to catch hold of any passing stranger, lay him down on the stubble, and, keeping firm grip of his legs and arms, throw him up and down in the air for several times. Never an accident comes of it. One should take it with the best grace possible; it is a compliment. You would not be hurt if you fell on the lasses' strong backs or shoulders, and you are expected to stand your hand, *i.e.* to give them a silver coin. A stranger who values his modesty, or objects to be taken in the arms of six bloused Ruths, should never enter a Lothian harvest field. Speaking from my own experience I think 'up in the air' is delightful and exhilarating, when done by cheery, hearty lasses with shouts and laughter. A sight fast dying out here is that of bare-footed children and breathless old women gathering 'singles' in the stubble fields. The clean gathering of the horse-rakes makes it unnecessary for the gleaners to step afield now. All hinds take a pride in their small gardens,

¹ Churn is the common Scotch form of the word, and from this some think the festival takes its name. Burns, whom nothing escaped, describes it well:—

The jovial ranting kirns
When rural life o' ev'ry station
Unite in common recreation.

See Jamieson's *Scottish Dictionary* for an interesting note tracing the ancient history of kirns and kirn babies.

some having a fancy for growing big leeks, or cabbages, or pansies. In West Lothian especially, the horticultural shows are largely attended by hinds; their wives vie with each other in rivalry to gain the prizes for the best home-baked bread, scones and cakes, and their daughters compete keenly for sewing, plain and fancy work.

The gangs of rustic women working on the fields like so many Ruths or Amazons, though to be found in the country between Northumberland and Ayr, are peculiarly characteristic of the Lothians, and they add a quaint colour to the landscape, with their large shades or 'uglies' projecting from their circular straw hats, which have been covered by their own hands with pieces of print usually of a delicate colour, such as pale yellow, pale pink, or pale blue. The name 'ugly' was no doubt given by a townsman in contempt, but the headdress, which the fashionable coal-scuttle hat resembles, is very picturesque with lovely brown faces, and throws out the deep heavy eyes, which open-air life gives to all. Their short kilted petticoats are grey and weather-stained, and the shawls about their strong shoulders are the strongest coloured article they wear. It may be that no woman enjoys the open-air work, but for the stirring, high-tilled farms here women-workers are necessary; and sometimes they feed the cattle and clean the large-stalled stables. The majority are in their teens or beyond thirty. All country women cannot be domestic servants or seamstresses; but an old hind herding with a gun will tell you that for a woman to work afield is her last resource, and that a lass with any spirit would not do it. A field of men and women, children of the plough, huge folk 'blouzed with health and wind and rain and labour,' working together on the red fen land, tells you how strong is the hold the farms and farm-work here have on the family life; and the high cultivation shows the necessity for woman-labour on this high-rented land. It is a most ancient sight, a fine grouped scene, which for easy rustic movements, sweet open-air beauty and freshness, and the tender tints of strong field clothes, can hardly be surpassed. Women have wrought on the fields since the Flood; women will work till the end of the chapter as long as seed has to be sown, turnips have to be thinned and hoed, hay made, grain reaped, potatoes lifted, the land cleaned, and 'wrack' gathered, and there are not men or boys enough in the parish for the work. It is at the same time a striking fact that the hinds' daughters are gradually allowing the Highland or Irish women to do all the field labour.

When old, the hinds impress you with the dignity and solemnity that come with age and field labour. They look the very spirit of the fields as they totter about in the spring evening with staff in hand, bended legs, and a short clay pipe wobbling between the toothless gums. They seem part of the earth's growth, and wizened like the sturdy oak. They give one the idea of an ancient lineage, of the perpetuity of hinds, of their being dedicated to the soil and solitude on the green surface. And they are in love with their country life. No men impress you so much as being actually worn out in mind and body. If you watch them, you will notice many do nothing but smoke their cutty pipes for five minutes at a time, wet their forefingers and press them on the smouldering pipe-ashes, and then doze, then waken up and scratch a match against the pipe tin cover, take a dozen puffs of the strong twist tobacco again with their heads leaning up the chimney, cough, and put the pipe, half-smoked, with the tobacco burning, into their waistcoat pockets. Often their pockets are thus burned away. Some never slept a night out of their own beds, and boast of it. They are not given to overmuch thinking, and it is a proverb with them, 'Thinking will kill a horse.' If they fall asleep at the fireside they are 'away to the coals,' the phrase arising from the long drives to the coal-pits in early morning. During the day, old Archie Peffers, for example, goes his rounds, pokes his nose into the smithy, gives his neighbours a cry in passing, and flavours his gossip with recollections about old masters, old neighbours, old times, and old sweethearts. With a 'snifter' clearing his dry throat, he judges the weather, which seems to rest on his upturned nose, then he lights a piece of match-paper which his son makes with saltpetre and brown parcel paper, and with mouth full of tobacco-smoke hobbles away on shaky legs to complete his round. His eyes are always on the ground; hardly a straw escapes him; with his stick he gathers the straggling straws on the road and shoves them into the hedge root, or, if they be sufficient, holding the bunch over his head and shoulders, he'll carry it home for bedding to his son's pigs. It is a rustic picture to see the stiff legs hobbling along, a staff striking the ground at short intervals, and a bunch of straw for a body and head. As the weary legs approach you hear the 'peching' (sound with a true German guttural), groaning old voice, and see through the open spaces of the straw a week's unshaved chin leaning on a breast, sunk eyes, and a nose traced with lines like a tree. He treads the rounds of his parents, and will shortly be gathered to his fathers. He makes a long journey

to the forest close at hand and picks up some faggots, which he drags home and dries at the whitewashed fireside. Then all night he sits and watches the piled-up faggots and twigs, and leans his hands on his stick. Sometimes he cries 'hist, st,' to the cows with udders full of milk as they return at nightfall to the byres. It is a life to be prayed for, my lads. These earthworn old men are delightful companions; they will sit and talk by the hour, or, if it is all the same to you, they will be as silent as a cat. The argumentative spirit is lost in their starved intelligence. Like the owls, it is only at nights when they make any noise with their tongues. With all their might they tell you about their life and experience in the world fifty years ago. Nothing less than fifty years ago satisfies them. Yesterday is too recent, to-day is everybody's, but fifty years ago is their own beyond contradiction. It is a proud moment when younger hinds in the ale-house refer to them, as you would refer to the annals of the time, for verification. The distance lends fictitious charms to their terrible talk of disasters, shipwrecks, accidents, and sad endings; and they seem to find joy in repeating sad stories. One often wonders how they can be bothered living in this age when only the world fifty years ago was worth living for. It is the finest pleasure they know, and sounds sweeter in their ears than the neigh of a horse, the low of their own cow, Lady, with the crumpled horn, or the cry of a sleeping bairn, to hear their own voice at night talking loud beside their oil lamps about their lives and days and nights fifty years ago. They were days, another ancient, old Hugh Sounness, will tell you, with that conscious air of alone possessing the secret to hold bairns awestruck with gaping mouths on winter nights,—when duty was on salt, and the hinds cooked porridge and boiled potatoes with sea-water from the Firth of Forth, when whisky was sixpence a pint, when in place of going to hiring-fairs he ran about at nights seeking 'a place,' when wages were cheap and folk plenty, when the coach-horns were heard at roadside ale-houses, when no Irishmen settled in the Lothians, and Scotchmen did all their own rough work, and stood up to the knees in wet soil at making drains. You feel he is living then, and speaking like an old calendar. His weary eyes are dusty glass you can't see in, and the more he talks and coughs and gesticulates with his right arm and looks at his wide-stretched legs, as if he could not understand why they rest so still and silent, as if they did not belong to him, the more you feel him slipping from your mental grasp. Sitting in his arm-chair, he

has travelled a life journey. It is a terrible wrench to old Hugh to start a topic of to-day ; every child at school can read it, and the dust of years has not covered it. A sure way to bring him back to the life about his feet is to talk about the cuts of loaf bread, the slices of fine meat, and the bowls full of milk which he gets from the farmer in the porridge-house. Then he smiles, lifts his eyebrows as if you offered him a drink, and looks at the cloth bag and black bottle swinging on a nail, which he used for carrying cold pork and scones or bread and milk to the fields for the midday meal in winter, when he never saw his cottage during daylight. The light recedes in his eyes, his hand falls heavily on the deal table, a creeping feeling grows across his shoulders, and with a deep sigh he moralises by way of reflection :

‘ How time wears away, man ! ’ After a dull uncertain pause he continues : ‘ How time runs on ! Daggins, lad, the time and place o’ our death’s pronounced on us a’ when we’re born ! Go’, it’s the God’s truth I’m telling you. I ha’e been at some men’s birth, ay an’ at their marriages, ay, an’ last o’ a’, I ha’e been at their funerals. ‘Od man, how the world turns ! I ha’e done everything in my day but preached and lent money. The first I wouldna do, and the last I couldna. But, man, how do the folk see to gaun on the sea in the dark ? Faigs, man, it’s extraordinary. You that comes from Edinburgh, ha’e you ever seen Bonaparte’s jacket hanging on the walls o’ a house there ? Eh ! what ? You’re no deaf ? ’

Hugh, though in his eighty-sixth year, is able to carry a gun and scare the crows from grain fields, or break stones. He carries at his watch-chain a coin sent by a son from a Crimean battle-field ; nightly he winds up his twenty-four hour clock, and makes down his own bed. Such old hinds do service as weather-glasses ; they hand down by ‘ word of mouth ’ old traditions and old memories as old soldiers used to do in the barrack canteen to the young recruits. They lived in the dull old days when servants used to be whipped, when the only way to come into a parish was to be born in it, when the terrible words of the press-gang men ‘ in the king’s name ’ were heard at nights, when hinds got the handsome wage of ninepence a day, when the farmers used to drive in carts to the kirk, and an old farmer carried a coal riddle above his head in mockery of the new-fangled contrivance, the umbrella. They are the wholesale dealers in parish gossip, which they receive in mysterious fashion. Who told them ? ‘ They say so,’ ‘ they heard tell,’ Everything is fathered on the broad shoulders and

dull eyes of 'the folk.' They are the hale, big-boned, tall hinds who dearly love to prattle, and cough, and spit about the chimney corners; they are the parish historians with every leaf of their wonderful memories well dog-eared. They live in the Arcady of our grandfathers. They are never eyesore, weak-chested, or troubled with modern complicated disease. It is beyond their comprehension why doctors never bleed now, and yet render an account for merely talking or simply patting them on the chest with a bit stick. Old Hugh sends our thoughts back to what seems a novelist's Arcady. He offers the apologetic remark, 'I no hear weel, an' I no speak muckle.' Yet with a little encouragement he talks slowly and kindly of that pleasant world fifty years ago—when only horn spoons were used to sup porridge and broth, and each member of a family knew his own spoon as well as he knew his place at the deal table; when the hinds were married in the parish minister's kitchen, and the lads dressed in blue coats with brass buttons and nankeen trousers, and the lasses attired in print gowns and big bonnets, walked arm in arm along the main road to the marriage, 'for,' old Hugh says, 'for a' the world like a flock o' geese.' (Scotch folk are now, and have for some years past been, married at their own homes.) A marriage party, like a funeral procession, carefully kept to the high roads or turnpikes, and avoided the bye-roads or foot-roads as being unlucky on such occasions. The lads and lasses frankly believed that they would not have been so happy and so hearty if they 'had no a wander' to the marriage, and, knowing no better, they thought it no degradation to be married in the minister's kitchen. Judging from the lingering memories that abound in old hinds' talk, the farmers and their hinds were then bound closer together by sharing each other's joys and sorrows. Such is the ancient hind's Arcady, strangely mixed with sentiment and disasters; but, in my humble judgment, the lives and manners and associations of the present-day hinds can yield to a kind heart as great a harvest of picturesque realism. Times change, laws alter, and agriculture even undergoes gradual improvements; but the patient hinds' lives can never be robbed of the sweet wealth of rustic charms that bloom and flower on Nature's broad breast.

'How time wears on!' to quote old Hugh again. 'How the world turns! Bless my heart! what do you call holidays? 'Od sake, what are they? Man, are they onything for eating?'

JAMES PURVES.

The Flower of March.

I HAVE ventured to call the daffodil the flower of March because although many other blossoms first make their appearance during the tempestuous month, there are none which are so closely identified with it, or which seem to partake so much of its own character. We figure to ourselves the month of March as strong, boisterous, full of vigour, and yet as having its own aspects of tender beauty; and such is the daffodil. Flowers like the snowdrop and the celandine seem to suit the early promise and the hesitating performance of February; but in March, the spring, though still battling with winter, has made good her footing among us, and a host of daffodils is the sign of her assured advance. In our own garden we never feel that the spring has really come until the yellow flowers are out by hundreds beneath the trees and along the old borders. Shakespeare embodies this connection between the month and the flower in his ever-famous passage—

Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.

No more than two lines; yet how perfect it is as poetry, and how accurate as the observation of a naturalist! We see the rough weather of March contrasted with the softer season which will succeed, and which will bring the swallow in its train; we see the flower bold to come before the bird and swinging in the wind as its custom is. It is pleasant to find dear old Gilbert White quoting this same passage in support of his own observation. In his *Naturalists' Calendar* the flowering of the daffodil and the arrival of the swallow are both noted. February 24 and April 7 are the earliest and latest dates on which he had observed the plant unfolding its bloom. March 26 and April 20 are the corresponding entries with regard to the first appearance of the swallow.

One must not expect to get the same unerring touch in our

other poets. Spenser, in his 'Shepherd's Calendar,' reverses the proper order. He makes the swallow appear in March—

Winter's wrath beginnes to quell,
And pleasant spring appeareth :
The grasse nowe ginnes to be refresht,
The Swallow peepes out of her nest,
And clowdie Welkin cleareth ;—

while the daffodil is put into the Eclogue for April with pinks and carnations, columbines and gilliflowers—

Strowe me the ground with Daffadowndillies,
And Cowslips, and Kingcups, and loved Lillies.

Mr. Tennyson also in one passage has chosen to connect the flower with the month of April—

A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly—

although elsewhere in a sonnet he speaks of the month of March as the

Roaring moon of daffodil
And crocus.

There is but one other passage in Shakespeare in which the daffodil is alluded to. It is in the song of Autolycus, and although brief, it includes another 'touch of nature'—

When daffodils begin to peer,
With heigh ! the doxy over the dale,
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year ;
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

'Begin to peer' is an expression which describes with completest accuracy the unfolding of the daffodil bud, and the appearance presented by the half-opened flower. It might also be applied to the aspect of the plant when it first comes above the ground. This generally occurs very early in the month of February. In a wild part of our own garden, where a little stream runs between banks some ten or twelve feet high down into a glen, I shall find, close by the edge of the water, the first clump of daffodils peering above the ground. The light-green sheath is two or three inches high, and has just the faintest touch of yellow at its tip, thus showing already the two colours which hereafter, in combination, will make it so beautiful. If I examine it very closely, I see how like it is to a small fairy sword-blade. It is sharp, two-edged, pointed, and hollow on the inner side ; calculated, in short, in

every way for forcing its passage upward through the frozen ground. There is not much other greenery in the neighbourhood. The crumpled primrose leaves are not yet unfurled, the ferns are round bosses of silvery grey, which show no signs of life, and the only things fairly opened are some great buckler-shaped leaves of sorrel. More than once the daffodil gets covered up with snow; but it suffers nothing by that; and when its white coverlid is gone, it looks greener than ever. About the middle of the month we hear the lark for the first time; snowdrops and primroses are out; the yellow jasmine is in flower; a pear-tree, which is nailed to a south wall, is in leaf-bud; and the chestnut twigs are tipped with black and shining gum. On the eighteenth of February the daffodil flower is seen perceptibly swelling underneath its tight green sheath. In spite of rain, wind, and sleet, the crocuses are out; and in the evening, during a spell of watery sunshine, the blackbird, the thrush, and the robin may all be heard singing together.

On the first of March our forward daffodil by the water's edge is just ready to unsheath, but holds back because the wind is in the north-east. It is curious to observe how, at this season of the year when the wind gets easterly, all vegetation seems to conspire in remaining quite stationary; bud and leaf and grass-blade presenting day after day precisely the same appearance. A little later, though there are still severe frosts in the night, the days become more genial, and the march of life begins again. The daffodil is in the foremost rank, and becomes now, even before the unfolding of the flower, an object of exquisite beauty. The spathe or sheath, in which the bloom is carefully swaddled to protect it from the cold, is greyish green in colour, and semi-transparent. As the bud swells still more, the sheath is forced back, and the brilliant yellow-green of the flower may now be seen. By the sixth of March the sheath has lost its green tinge—it is entirely grey—and has fallen, so that the sepals of the calyx are visible. They are yellow, with a strip of harmonious green running up the centre. The corolla, though still curled, is partially open. This is our first daffodil, and it is born on a daffodil-morning. There is a strong wind blowing from the north-west. The sky, intensely blue, is chequered with clouds of black and grey. The sun shines brightly, then there is a sudden drift of hail, which whitens the ground. After that the sunlight is brighter and warmer than before. The starlings are particularly busy. They are in a delighted hurry, and seem to be looking

for nesting places along the roof and under the eaves of our old barn. The air, though cold, is fresh and sweet. Life, motion, vigour, are everywhere, in the sky, and on the earth, and behind it all we seem to apprehend the propelling forces of the spring.

At first this precursor is followed by other flowers singly; and then, with a change of wind to the south, they come out by dozens, and, going into the garden in the early morning while the grass is still heavily strung with pearls of dew, some wandering breath of warm wind brings to me once and away, the delightful perfume of the daffodils. Was Shakespeare thinking of this sweetness of odour as well as of the loveliness of form and colour, when he spoke of the flower *taking* the winds of March with beauty? The scent, though faint and evanescent, is most delicious—a truly ‘country smell.’ I think it resembles that of meadow-sweet; but it is not so strong, and there is some other odour mixed with it which I cannot name.

By the middle of the month there are hundreds blooming together, and this is as it ought to be. A single plant is a lovely object, and even before the days of æsthetic raptures, some of us might have been content to sit before it for hours admiring its Greek simplicity of outline and the perfect toning of its colour, beginning with the dark green of its long, thin, curving leaves and passing on through the calyx and the outer petals of the corolla, where a lighter green is mixed with yellow, and so on, the green ever diminishing, until in the centre of the flower the only colour left is that of a deep and vivid saffron. Still the glory of the daffodil is not seen until we have it in large numbers. Wordsworth felt this, and his well-known poem expresses it—

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle o’er the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

Our daffodils have been planted chiefly in a little wood which lies to the south-west of the garden and near to the stream of which I have spoken. They grow best under the trees, and look well there, making a sunshine in a shady place. They give little trouble and are ever increasing, as they propagate themselves by throwing off lateral bulbs. At first we had only the double variety. These are not so beautiful in form; but the colour is richer, and they have the advantage of flowering at least a fortnight

earlier than the single kind. A friend who lives among the Cheshire meadows sent me some roots of the latter, and we now have both sorts growing together.

About the eighteenth of March, when the flower-buds are out on the pear tree, and the lilacs and thorns are turning green, the daffodils are at their best. Slight frosts at night do them no harm, and in the morning, when their heads hang heavy with dew waiting for the sun to touch them, their freshness and beauty are most conspicuous. The daffodil, however, is a flower which must hold itself ready to meet the sudden stroke of adversity. A few days later there comes a heavy fall of snow with whirling blasts of wind. Winter has returned; the new greenness is gone; branches of trees, and the boles too, on the side next the wind, are all whitened; and, in the evening, the new moon shines brilliantly on roofs which lie deep in snow. Many of the daffodils are now beaten down by the wind or snapped off by the weight of snow. Those which are broken we gather, going round carefully and cutting them with a knife. We then take them into the house and put them in pots of water, where they make a brave show and last for many days. On the twenty-ninth of March the wintry weather has retreated; the air is warm and moist; the green mantle on the trees enlarges every day, and the daffodils which were not broken rise again and look as beautiful as ever. On the sixth of April the chestnut leaves are unfurled, and the daffodils—just a month after the appearance of the first flower—are so nearly over that we bid them good-bye for another year.

The word daffodil is somewhat loosely used, and it may be well to say that the flower we have been considering is *Narcissus Pseudo-narcissus*. It is called in various places besides daffodil—daffadilly, daffadowndilly, daffadown, and daffy. Some suppose the word to be a corruption of *asphodel*; but others maintain that it is simply a form of an Old English word, *affodyle*.

The asphodel belongs to the family of lilies, while the daffodil is an *amaryllid*. They are allied to each other, and in some of the old herbals they are certainly confused, while in others their distinctiveness is maintained. Markham, in his 'English Housewife,' 1637 (quoted in the English Dialect Society's 'Dictionary of Plant Names'), says: 'You must be carefull that you take not Daffodil for Affodil.' In that quaint old book, 'The Names of Herbes in Greke Latin English Duch and Frenche wyth the commune names that Herbaries and Apotecaries yse. Gathered by William Turner,' three daffodils are given. This

was in 1548. 'Narcissus is of diuerse sortes. There is one wyth a purple floure, which I neuer sawe, and an other wyth a white floure, which groweth plētuously in my Lordes gardine in Syon, and it is called of diuerse, whyte Laus tibi, it may be called also whyte daffadyl. Plenie maketh mention of a kynde called Narcissus herbaceus, which is after my iudgement our yealowe daffodyl.' These are the *Narcissus poeticus* and the *Narcissus Pseudo-narcissus*. Elsewhere Turner mentions a third:—'It groweth in gardines in Anwerp, it may be named in Englishe whyte affodil, or duche daffodil.' This is the *Asphodelus ramosus*.

Drayton, in his 'Polyolbion,' is severely accurate—

Amongst those things of sent, there prick they in the lilly ;
And neere to that againe, her sister daffadilly.

With him the daffodil is not the lily, but it is her sister.

The mention of Drayton brings us back to the poets, with whom the daffodil has ever been a prime favourite; indeed, the flower may be said to be in every poet's pleasure. Drayton himself sings quaintly of a shepherdess under the name of Daffodil—

My fair flower thou didst not meet,
Nor news of her didst bring,
And yet my Daffodil's more sweet
Than that by yonder spring.

This conceit seems to have been common, for an old song begins—

Now fair Daffodilla is come to town,
With her yellow petticoat and her green gown.

With the Elizabethans, especially, the daffodil was in constant use. Robert Greene introduces it into one of his halting hexameters—

Sweet hollyhock, or else daffodil, or slips of a bay-tree.

Herrick's poem, 'Fair Daffadils, we weep to see,' is too familiar to need quotation. It enshrines a charming fancy, but it is hardly true to nature, the daffodil being, as we have seen, a long-enduring flower, and not one which, as the poet says, 'hastes away so soon.' Herrick puts the daffodil into many of his lines, and always with a pleasant flavour—

Tripping the comely country Round,
With daffadils and daisies crown'd.

And again—

Thy feasting-table shall be hills
With daisies spread, and daffadils
Where thou shalt sit, and Red-breast by,
For meat shall give thee melody.

The two passages in which Milton mentions the daffodil are among the most beautiful pieces of poetry in the language. The first is in 'Comus'—

Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.

Milton probably used the word *gaudy* with reference rather to its older sense, as that which brings gladness, than to its more modern meaning, which infers something ostentatiously and coarsely coloured. The second passage is in 'Lycidas'—

Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.

Passing to our later poets, we come first upon Keats. He knew not only how to touch the beautiful mythology of Greece without dulling its brightness, but also how to bring up in a single phrase—perhaps better than any other of the moderns—the rural spirit of his own country. The passage to be quoted is from the opening of 'Endymion'—

Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in.

Mr. Tennyson's allusions to the daffodil, besides the one already given, are confined to its colour and to its lustrous quality—

On a bed of daffodil sky.

The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies.

Mr. Matthew Arnold has one characteristic line in 'Thyrsis'—

I know the wood which hides the daffodil.

Of the minor poets who have contributed to the anthology of the daffodil there is only space to mention a few. John Clare,

who seldom uses a wrong phrase in describing rural appearances, alludes, in his 'Shepherd's Calendar,' to the drooping habit of the flower—

What time the dew's unsullied drops,
In burnish'd gold, distil
On crocus flowers' unclosing tops
And drooping daffodil.

In Thomas Hood's beautiful 'Plea of the Midsummer Fairies' a fay, speaking as the handmaid of Spring, is made to say—

The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green ;
Pansies, and those veiled nuns, meek violets,
Sighing to that warm world from which they screen ;
And golden daffodils, plucked for May's Queen.

One American poet at least has acclimatised the daffodil. In Bryant's 'Invitation to the Country' we find it mentioned among 'bluebirds' and 'Easter sparrows'—

Though many a flower in the wood is waking,
The daffodil is our doorside queen ;
She pushes upward the sward already,
To spot with sunshine the early green.

In some parts of England daffodils, in allusion of course to the season during which they are frequently in flower, are called Lent lilies and Lenten lilies. This last is sometimes curiously corrupted into lantern lilies. In Devonshire they are also known as Lent roses, and the peculiar plural form Lent rosen is sometimes used. In Frederick William Faber's now little known poem 'Sir Lancelot' this ecclesiastical association of the daffodil is recognised. The passage occurs in the fourth book, 'The Beautiful Year,' in which most of our English flowers are felicitously described—

First, like a flock of children, purely white,
The snowdrops lead the van
The wood is twinkling with a thousand eyes,
And, by harmonious shading reconciled
With that low-lying atmosphere of stars,
The deep Lent lilies glow among the flowers
Like constellations girt with lesser orbs.

In Mrs. Alexander's 'Legend of the Golden Prayers' a poem

on Lent lilies will also be found, of which the first stanza may be quoted—

Fair children of unwilling spring,
 They grow beside our leafless bowers,
 And gentle hopes and perfumes bring
 To cheer our cold and dreary hours.
 To sunless skies and scentless gale
 They lift their leaves of golden hue.
 Sweet friend, they tell a cheering tale :
 Our Lent has lilies too !

With Aubrey de Vere and William Allingham these specimens must conclude. The first has an 'Ode to the Daffodil,' from which I take the following lines :

Herald and harbinger ! with thee
 Begins the year's great jubilee !
 Thou laugh'st, bold outcast bright as brave,
 When the wood bellows, and the cave,
 And leagues inland is heard the wave !
 Hating the dainty and the fine,
 As sings the blackbird thou dost shine !
 Thou com'st while yet on mountain lawns high up
 Lurks the last snow. . . .
 Take my song's blessing, and depart,
 Type of true service—unrequited heart.

Mr. Allingham's contribution is a sonnet recently published by him in a little volume of unpretentious but delightfully healthy and homely verse—

Gold tassel upon March's bugle-horn,
 Whose blithe reveille blows from hill to hill
 And every valley rings,—O Daffodil !
 What promise for the season newly born ?
 Shall wave on wave of flow'rs, full tide of corn,
 O'erflow the world, then fruited Autumn fill
 Hedgerow and garth ? Shall tempest, blight, or chill,
 Turn all felicity to scathe and scorn ?
 Tantarrara ! the joyous Book of Spring
 Lies open, writ in blossoms ; not a bird
 Of evil augury is seen or heard ;
 Come now, like Pan's old crew we'll dance and sing,
 Or Oberon's ; for hill and valley ring
 To March's bugle-horn,—Earth's blood is stirr'd.

GEORGE MILNER.

The Treasure of Franchard.

CHAPTER I.

BY THE DYING MOUNTEBANK.

THEY had sent for the doctor from Bourron before six. About eight some villagers came round for the performance, and were told how matters stood. It seemed a liberty for a mountebank to fall ill like real people, and they made off again in dudgeon. By ten Madame Tentailon was gravely alarmed, and had sent down the street for Doctor Desprez.

The Doctor was at work over his manuscripts in one corner of the little dining-room, and his wife was asleep over the fire in another, when the messenger arrived.

‘Sapristi!’ said the Doctor, ‘you should have sent for me before. It was a case for hurry.’ And he followed the messenger as he was—in his slippers and skull-cap.

The inn was not thirty yards away, but the messenger did not stop there; he went in at one door and out by another into the court, and then led the way by a flight of steps beside the stable, to the loft where the mountebank lay sick. If Doctor Desprez were to live a thousand years, he would never forget his arrival in that room; for not only was the scene picturesque, but the moment made a date in his existence. We reckon our lives, I hardly know why, from the day of our first sorry appearance in society, as if from a first humiliation; for no actor can come upon the stage with a worse grace. Not to go further back, which would be judged too curious, there are subsequently many moving and decisive accidents in the lives of all, which would make as logical a period as this of birth. And here, for instance, Doctor Desprez, a man past forty, who had made what is called a failure in life, and was moreover married, found himself at a new point of departure when he opened the door of the loft above Tentailon’s stable.

It was a large place, lighted only by a single candle set upon the floor. The mountebank lay on his back upon a pallet; a

large man, with a Quixotic nose inflamed with drinking. Madame Tentaillon stooped over him, applying a hot water and mustard friction to his feet; and on a chair close by sat a little fellow of eleven or twelve, with his feet dangling. These three were the only occupants, except the shadows. But the shadows were a company in themselves; the extent of the room exaggerated them to a gigantic size, and from the low position of the candle the light struck upwards and produced deformed foreshortenings. The mountebank's profile was enlarged upon the wall in caricature, and it was strange to see his nose shorten and lengthen as the flame was blown about by draughts. As for Madame Tentaillon, her shadow was no more than a gross hump of shoulders, with now and again a hemisphere of head. The chair legs were spindled out as long as stilts, and the boy sat perched atop of them, like a cloud, in a corner of the roof.

It was the boy who took the Doctor's fancy. He had a great arched skull, the forehead and the hands of a musician, and a pair of haunting eyes. It was not merely that these eyes were large, or steady, or the softest ruddy brown. There was a look in them, besides, which thrilled the Doctor, and made him half uneasy. He was sure he had seen such a look before, and yet he could not remember how or where. It was as if this boy, who was quite a stranger to him, had the eyes of an old friend or an old enemy. And the boy would give him no peace; he seemed profoundly indifferent to what was going on, or rather abstracted from it in a superior contemplation, beating gently with his feet against the bars of the chair, and holding his hands folded on his lap. But, for all that, his eyes kept following the Doctor about the room with a thoughtful fixity of gaze. Desprez could not tell whether he was fascinating the boy, or the boy was fascinating him. He busied himself over the sick man: he put questions, he felt the pulse, he jested, he grew a little hot and swore; and still, whenever he looked round, there were the brown eyes waiting for his with the same inquiring, melancholy gaze.

At last the Doctor hit on the solution at a leap. He remembered the look now. The little fellow, although he was as straight as a dart, had the eyes that go usually with a crooked back; he was not at all deformed, and yet a deformed person seemed to be looking at you from below his brows. The Doctor drew a long breath, he was so much relieved to find a theory (for he loved theories) and to explain away his interest.

For all that, he despatched the invalid with unusual haste,

and, still kneeling with one knee on the floor, turned a little round and looked the boy over at his leisure. The boy was not in the least put out, but looked placidly back at the Doctor.

‘Is this your father?’ asked Desprez.

‘Oh, no,’ returned the boy; ‘my master.’

‘Are you fond of him?’ continued the Doctor.

‘No, sir,’ said the boy.

Madame Tentaillon and Desprez exchanged expressive glances.

‘That is bad, my man,’ resumed the latter, with a shade of sternness. ‘Every one should be fond of the dying, or conceal their sentiments; and your master here is dying. If I have watched a bird a little while stealing my cherries, I have a thought of disappointment when he flies away over my garden wall, and I see him steer for the forest and vanish. How much more a creature such as this, so strong, so astute, so richly endowed with faculties! When I think that, in a few hours, the speech will be silenced, the breath extinct, and even the shadow vanished from the wall, I who never saw him, this lady who knew him only as a guest, are touched with some affection.’

The boy was silent for a little, and appeared to be reflecting.

‘You did not know him,’ he replied at last. ‘He was a bad man.’

‘He is a little pagan,’ said the landlady. ‘For that matter, they are all the same, these mountebanks, tumblers, artists, and whatnot. They have no interior.’

But the Doctor was still scrutinising the little pagan, his eyebrows knotted and uplifted.

‘What is your name?’ he asked.

‘Jean-Marie,’ said the lad.

Desprez leaped upon him with one of his sudden flashes of excitement, and felt his head all over from an ethnological point of view.

‘Celtic, Celtic!’ he said.

‘Celtic!’ cried Madame Tentaillon, who had perhaps confounded the word with hydrocephalous. ‘Poor lad! is it dangerous?’

‘That depends,’ returned the Doctor grimly. And then once more addressing the boy: ‘And what do you do for your living, Jean-Marie?’ he inquired.

‘I tumble,’ was the answer.

‘So! Tumble?’ repeated Desprez. ‘Probably healthful. I hazard the guess, Madame Tentaillon, that tumbling is a healthful way of life. And have you never done anything else but tumble?’

‘Before I learned that, I used to steal,’ answered Jean-Marie gravely.

‘Upon my word!’ cried the doctor. ‘You are a nice little man for your age. Madame, when my *confrère* comes from Bourron, you will communicate my unfavourable opinion. I leave the case in his hands; but of course, on any alarming symptom, above all if there should be a sign of rally, do not hesitate to knock me up. I am a doctor no longer, I thank God; but I have been one. Good night, madame. Good sleep to you, Jean-Marie.’

CHAPTER II.

MORNING TALK.

DOCTOR DESPREZ always rose early. Before the smoke arose, before the first cart rattled over the bridge to the day’s labour in the fields, he was to be found wandering in his garden. Now he would pick a bunch of grapes; now he would eat a big pear under the trellis; now he would draw all sorts of fancies on the path with the end of his cane; now he would go down and watch the river running endlessly past the timber landing-place at which he moored his boat. There was no time, he used to say, for making theories like the early morning. ‘I rise earlier than any one else in the village,’ he once boasted. ‘It is a fair consequence that I know more and wish to do less with my knowledge.’

The Doctor was a connoisseur of sunrises, and loved a good theatrical effect to usher in the day. He had a theory of dew, by which he could predict the weather. Indeed, most things served him to that end: the sound of the bells from all the neighbouring villages, the smell of the forest, the visits and the behaviour of both birds and fishes, the look of the plants in his garden, the disposition of cloud, the colour of the light, and last, although not least, the arsenal of meteorological instruments in a louvre-boarded hutch upon the lawn. Ever since he had settled at Gretz, he had been growing more and more into the local meteorologist, the unpaid champion of the local climate. He thought at first there was no place so healthful in the arrondissement. By the end of the second year, he protested there was none so wholesome in the whole department. And for some time before he met Jean-Marie, he had been prepared to challenge all France and the better part of Europe for a rival to his chosen spot.

‘Doctor,’ he would say—‘doctor is a foul word. It should not be used to ladies. It implies disease. I remark it, as a flaw in our civilisation, that we have not the proper horror of disease. Now I, for my part, have washed my hands of it; I have renounced my laureation; I am no doctor; I am only a worshipper of the true goddess Hygieia. Ah, believe me, it is she who has the cestus! And here, in this exiguous hamlet, has she placed her shrine; here she dwells and lavishes her gifts; here I walk with her in the early morning, and she shows me how strong she has made the peasants, how fruitful she has made the fields, how the trees grow up tall and comely under her eyes, and the fishes in the river become clean and agile at her presence.—Rheumatism!’ he would cry, on some malapert interruption. ‘Oh, yes, I believe we do have a little rheumatism. That could hardly be avoided, you know, on a river. And of course the place stands a little low; and the meadows are marshy, there’s no doubt. But, my dear sir, look at Bourron! Bourron stands high. Bourron is close to the forest; plenty of ozone there, you would say. Well, compared with Gretz, Bourron is a perfect shambles.’

The morning after he had been summoned to the dying mountebank, the Doctor visited the wharf at the tail of his garden, and had a long look at the running water. This he called prayer; but whether his adorations were addressed to the goddess Hygieia or some more orthodox deity, never plainly appeared. For he had uttered doubtful oracles, sometimes declaring that a river was the type of bodily health, sometimes extolling it as the great moral preacher, continually preaching peace, continuity, and diligence to man’s tormented spirits. After he had watched a mile or so of the clear water running by before his eyes, seen a fish or two come to the surface with a gleam of silver, and sufficiently admired the long shadows of the trees falling half across the river from the opposite bank, with patches of moving sunlight in between, he strolled once more up the garden and through his house into the street, feeling cool and renovated.

The sound of his feet upon the causeway began the business of the day; for the village was still sound asleep. The church tower looked very airy in the sunlight; a few birds that turned about it, seemed to swim in an atmosphere of more than usual rarity; and the Doctor, walking in long, transparent shadows, filled his lungs amply, and proclaimed himself well contented with the morning.

On one of the posts before Tentaillon’s carriage entry, he

espied a little dark figure perched in a meditative attitude, and immediately recognised Jean-Marie.

‘Aha!’ he said, stopping before him humorously, with a hand on either knee. ‘So we rise early in the morning, do we? It appears to me that you have all the vices of a philosopher.’

The boy got to his feet and made a grave salutation.

‘And how is our patient?’ asked Desprez.

It appeared the patient was about the same.

‘And why do you rise early in the morning?’ he pursued.

Jean-Marie, after a long silence, professed that he hardly knew.

‘You hardly know?’ repeated Desprez. ‘We hardly know anything, my man, until we try to learn. Interrogate your consciousness. Come, push me this inquiry home. Do you like it?’

‘Yes,’ said the boy slowly; ‘yes, I like it.’

‘And why do you like it?’ continued the Doctor. ‘We are now pursuing the Socratic method. Why do you like it?’

‘It is so quiet,’ answered Jean-Marie; ‘and I have nothing to do; and then I feel as if I were good.’

Doctor Desprez took a seat on the post at the opposite side. He was beginning to take an interest in the talk, for the boy plainly thought before he spoke, and tried to answer truly. ‘It appears you have a taste for feeling good,’ said the Doctor. ‘Now, there you puzzle me extremely; for I thought you said you were a thief; and the two are incompatible.’

‘Is it so very bad to steal?’ asked Jean-Marie.

‘Such is the general opinion, little boy,’ replied the Doctor.

‘No; but I mean as I stole,’ explained the other. ‘For I had no choice. I think it is surely right to have bread; it must be right to have bread, there comes so plain a want of it. And then they beat me cruelly if I returned with nothing,’ he added. ‘I was not ignorant of right and wrong; for before that I had been well taught by a priest, who was very kind to me.’ (The Doctor made a horrible grimace at the word ‘priest.’) ‘But it seemed to me, when one had nothing to eat and was beaten, it was a different affair. I would not have stolen for tartlets, I believe; but any one would steal for baker’s bread.’

‘And so I suppose,’ said the Doctor, with a rising sneer, ‘you prayed God to forgive you, and explained the case to Him at length.’

‘Why, sir?’ asked Jean-Marie. ‘I do not see.’

‘Your priest would see, however,’ retorted Desprez.

‘Would he?’ asked the boy, troubled for the first time. ‘I should have thought God would have known.’

‘Eh?’ snarled the Doctor.

‘I should have thought God would have understood me,’ replied the other. ‘You do not, I see; but then it was God that made me think so, was it not?’

‘Little boy, little boy,’ said Doctor Desprez, ‘I told you already you had the vices of philosophy; if you display the virtues also, I must go. I am a student of the blessed laws of health, an observer of plain and temperate nature in her common walks; and I cannot preserve my equanimity in presence of a monster. Do you understand?’

‘No, sir,’ said the boy.

‘I will make my meaning clear to you,’ replied the Doctor. ‘Look there at the sky—behind the belfry first, where it is so light, and then up and up, turning your chin back, right to the top of the dome, where it is already as blue as at noon. Is not that a beautiful colour? Does it not please the heart? We have seen it all our lives, until it has grown in with our familiar thoughts. Now,’ changing his tone, ‘suppose that sky to become suddenly of a live and fiery amber, like the colour of clear coals, and growing scarlet towards the top—I do not say it would be any the less beautiful; but would you like it as well?’

‘I suppose not,’ answered Jean-Marie.

‘Neither do I like you,’ returned the Doctor, roughly. ‘I hate all odd people, and you are the most curious little boy in all the world.’

Jean-Marie seemed to ponder for a while, and then he raised his head again and looked over at the Doctor with an air of candid inquiry. ‘But are not you a very curious gentleman?’ he asked.

The Doctor threw away his stick, bounded on the boy, clasped him to his bosom, and kissed him on both cheeks. ‘Admirable, admirable imp!’ he cried. ‘What a morning, what an hour for a theorist of forty-two! No,’ he continued, apostrophising heaven, ‘I did not know such boys existed; I was ignorant they made them so; I had doubted of my race; and now! It is like,’ he added, picking up his stick, ‘like a lover’s meeting. I have bruised my favourite staff in that moment of enthusiasm. The injury, however, is not grave.’ He caught the boy looking at him in obvious wonder, embarrassment, and alarm. ‘Hullo!’ said he, ‘why do you look at me like that? Egad, I believe the boy despises me. Do you despise me, boy?’

'Oh, no,' replied Jean-Marie, seriously; 'only I do not understand.'

'You must excuse me, sir,' returned the Doctor, with gravity; 'I am still so young. Oh, hang him!' he added to himself. And he took his seat again and observed the boy sardonically. 'He has spoiled the quiet of my morning,' thought he. 'I shall be nervous all day, and have a febricule when I digest. Let me compose myself.' And so he dismissed his preoccupations by an effort of the will which he had long practised, and let his soul roam abroad in the contemplation of the morning. He inhaled the air, tasting it critically as a connoisseur tastes a vintage, and prolonging the expiration with hygienic gusto. He counted the little flecks of cloud along the sky. He followed the movements of the birds round the church tower—making long sweeps, hanging poised, or turning airy somersaults in fancy, and beating the wind with imaginary pinions. And in this way he regained peace of mind and animal composure, conscious of his limbs, conscious of the sight of his eyes, conscious that the air had a cool taste, like a fruit, at the top of his throat; and at last, in complete abstraction, he began to sing. The doctor had but one air—'*Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre*;' even with that he was on terms of mere politeness; and his musical exploits were always reserved for moments when he was alone and entirely happy.

He was recalled to earth rudely by a pained expression on the boy's face. 'What do you think of my singing?' he inquired, stopping in the middle of a note; and then, after he had waited some little while and received no answer, 'What do you think of my singing?' he repeated, imperiously.

'I do not like it,' faltered Jean-Marie.

'Oh, come!' cried the Doctor. 'Possibly you are a performer yourself?'

'I sing better than that,' replied the boy.

The Doctor eyed him for some seconds in stupefaction. He was aware that he was angry, and blushed for himself in consequence, which made him angrier. 'If this is how you address your master!' he said at last, with a shrug and a flourish of his arms.

'I do not speak to him at all,' returned the boy. 'I do not like him.'

'Then you like me?' snapped Doctor Desprez, with unusual eagerness.

'I do not know,' answered Jean-Marie.

The Doctor rose. 'I shall wish you a good morning,' he said. 'You are too much for me. Perhaps you have blood in your veins, perhaps celestial ichor, or perhaps you circulate nothing more gross than respirable air; but of one thing I am inextinguishably assured:—that you are no human being. No, boy'—shaking his stick at him—'you are not a human being. Write, write it in your memory—"I am not a human being—I have no pretension to be a human being—I am a dive, a dream, an angel, an acrostic, an illusion—what you please, but not a human being." And so accept my humble salutations, and farewell!'

And with that the Doctor made off along the street in some emotion, and the boy stood, mentally gaping, where he left him.

CHAPTER III.

THE ADOPTION.

MADAME DESPREZ, who answered to the Christian name of Anastasie, presented an agreeable type of her sex; exceedingly wholesome to look upon, a stout *brune*, with cool, smooth cheeks, steady, dark eyes, and hands that neither art nor nature could improve. She was the sort of person over whom adversity passes like a summer cloud; she might, in the worst of conjunctures, knit her brows into one vertical furrow for a moment, but the next it would be gone. She had much of the placidity of a contented nun; with little of her piety, however; for Anastasie was of a very mundane nature, fond of oysters and old wine, and somewhat bold pleasantries, and devoted to her husband for her own sake rather than for his. She was imperturbably good-natured, but had no idea of self-sacrifice. To live in that pleasant old house, with a green garden behind and bright flowers about the window, to eat and drink of the best, to gossip with a neighbour for a quarter of an hour, never to wear stays or a dress except when she went to Fontainebleau shopping, to be kept in a continual supply of racy novels, and to be married to Doctor Desprez and have no ground of jealousy, filled the cup of her nature to the brim. Those who had known the Doctor in bachelor days, when he had aired quite as many theories, but of a different order, attributed his present philosophy to the study of Anastasie. It was her brute enjoyment that he rationalised and perhaps vainly imitated.

Madame Desprez was an artist in the kitchen, and made coffee to a nicety. She had a knack of tidiness, with which she had infected the Doctor: everything was in its place; everything capable of polish shone gloriously; and dust was a thing banished from her empire. Aline, their single servant, had no other business in the world but to scour and burnish. So Doctor Desprez lived in his house like a fatted calf, warmed and cosseted to his heart's content.

The midday meal was excellent. There was a ripe melon, a fish from the river in a memorable Béarnaise sauce, a fat fowl in a fricassee, and a dish of asparagus, followed by some fruit. The Doctor drank half a bottle *plus* one glass, the wife half a bottle *minus* the same quantity, which was a marital privilege, of an excellent Côte Rotie, seven years old. Then the coffee was brought, and a flask of Chartreuse for madame, for the Doctor despised and distrusted such decoctions; and then Aline left the wedded pair to the pleasures of memory and digestion.

'It is a very fortunate circumstance, my cherished one,' observed the Doctor—'this coffee is adorable—a very fortunate circumstance upon the whole—Anastasie, I beseech you, go without that poison for to-day; only one day, and you will feel the benefit, I pledge my reputation.'

'What is this fortunate circumstance, my friend?' inquired Anastasie, not heeding his protest, which was of daily recurrence.

'That we have no children, my beautiful,' replied the Doctor. 'I think of it more and more as the years go on, and with more and more gratitude towards the Power that dispenses such afflictions. Your health, my darling, my studious quiet, our little kitchen delicacies, how they would all have suffered, how they would all have been sacrificed! And for what? Children are the last word of human imperfection. Health flees before their face. They cry, my dear; they put vexatious questions; they demand to be fed, to be washed, to be educated, to have their noses blown; and then, when the time comes, they break our hearts, as I break this piece of sugar. A pair of professed egoists, like you and me, should avoid offspring, like an infidelity.'

'Indeed!' said she; and she laughed. 'Now, that is like you—to take credit for the thing you could not help.'

'My dear,' returned the Doctor, solemnly, 'we might have adopted.'

'Never!' cried madame. 'Never, Doctor, with my consent. If the child were my own flesh and blood, I would not say no.'

But to take another person's indiscretion on my shoulders—my dear friend, I have too much sense.'

'Precisely,' replied the Doctor. 'We both had. And I am all the better pleased with our wisdom, because—because——' He looked at her sharply.

'Because what?' she asked, with a faint premonition of danger.

'Because I have found the right person,' said the Doctor firmly, 'and shall adopt him this afternoon.'

Anastasie looked at him out of a mist. 'You have lost your reason,' she said; and there was a clang in her voice that seemed to threaten trouble.

'Not so, my dear,' he replied; 'I retain its complete exercise. To the proof: instead of attempting to cloak my inconsistency, I have, by way of preparing you, thrown it into strong relief. You will there, I think, recognise the philosopher who has the ecstasy to call you wife. The fact is, I have been reckoning all this while without an accident. I never thought to find a son of my own. Now, last night, I found one. Do not unnecessarily alarm yourself, my dear; he is not a drop of blood to me that I know. It is his mind, darling, his mind that calls me father.'

'His mind!' she repeated with a titter between scorn and hysterics. 'His mind, indeed! Henri, is this an idiotic pleasantry, or are you mad? His mind! And what of my mind?'

'Truly,' replied the Doctor with a shrug, 'you have your finger on the hitch. He will be strikingly antipathetic to my ever beautiful Anastasie. She will never understand him; he will never understand her. You married the animal side of my nature, dear; and it is on the spiritual side that I find my affinity for Jean-Marie. So much so, that, to be perfectly frank, I stand in some awe of him myself. You will easily perceive that I am announcing a calamity for you. Do not,' he broke out in tones of real solicitude, 'do not give way to tears after a meal, Anastasie. You will certainly give yourself a false digestion.'

Anastasie controlled herself. 'You know how willing I am to humour you,' she said, 'in all reasonable matters. But on this point——'

'My dear love,' interrupted the Doctor, eager to prevent a refusal, 'who wished to leave Paris? Who made me give up cards, and the opera, and the boulevard, and my social relations, and all that was my life before I knew you? Have I been faithful? Have I been obedient? Have I not borne my doom with

cheerfulness? In all honesty, Anastasie, have I not a right to a stipulation on my side? I have, and you know it. I stipulate my son.'

Anastasie was aware of defeat; she struck her colours instantly. 'You will break my heart,' she sighed.

'Not in the least,' said he. 'You will feel a trifling inconvenience for a month, just as I did when I was first brought to this vile hamlet; then your admirable sense and temper will prevail, and I see you already as content as ever, and making your husband the happiest of men.'

'You know I can refuse you nothing,' she said, with a last flicker of resistance; 'nothing that will make you truly happier. But will this? Are you sure, my husband? Last night, you say, you found him! He may be the worst of humbugs.'

'I think not,' replied the Doctor. 'But do not suppose me so unwary as to adopt him out of hand. I am, I flatter myself, a finished man of the world; I have had all possibilities in view; my plan is contrived to meet them all. I take the lad as stable boy. If he pilfer, if he grumble, if he desire to change, I shall see I was mistaken; I shall recognise him for no son of mine, and send him tramping.'

'You will never do so when the time comes,' said his wife; 'I know your good heart.'

She reached out her hand to him, with a sigh; the Doctor smiled as he took it and carried it to his lips; he had gained his point with greater ease than he had dared to hope; for perhaps the twentieth time, he had proved the efficacy of his trusty argument, his Excalibur, the hint of a return to Paris. Six months in the capital, for a man of the Doctor's antecedents and relations, implied no less a calamity than total ruin. Anastasie had saved the remainder of his fortune by keeping him strictly in the country. The very name of Paris put her in a blue fear; and she would have allowed her husband to keep a menagerie in the back garden, let alone adopting a stable-boy, rather than permit the question of return to be discussed.'

About four of the afternoon, the mountebank rendered up his ghost; he had never been conscious since his seizure. Doctor Desprez was present at his last passage, and declared the farce over. Then he took Jean-Marie by the shoulder and led him out into the inn garden where there was a convenient bench beside the river. Here he sat him down and made the boy place himself on his left.

'Jean-Marie,' he said very gravely, 'this world is exceedingly vast; and even France, which is only a small corner of it, is a great place for a little lad like you. Unfortunately it is full of eager, shouldering people moving on; and there are very few bakers' shops for so many eaters. Your master is dead; you are not fit to gain a living by yourself; you do not wish to steal? No. Your situation then is undesirable, it is, for the moment, critical. On the other hand, you behold in me a man not old, though elderly; still enjoying the youth of the heart and the intelligence; a man of instruction; easily situated in this world's affairs; keeping a good table:—a man, neither as friend nor host, to be despised. I offer myself to you as both. I offer you your food and clothes, and to teach you lessons in the evening, which will be infinitely more to the purpose for a lad of your stamp than those of all the priests in Europe. I propose no wages, but if ever you take a thought to leave me, the door shall be open, and I will give you a hundred francs to start the world upon. In return, I have an old horse and chaise, which you would very speedily learn to clean and keep in order. Do not hurry yourself to answer, and take it or leave it as you judge aright. Only remember this, that I am no sentimentalist or charitable person, but a man who lives rigorously to himself; and that if I make the proposal, it is for my own ends—it is because I perceive clearly an advantage to myself. And now, reflect.'

'I shall be very glad. I do not see what else I can do. I thank you, sir, most kindly, and I will try to be useful,' said the boy.

'Thank you,' said the Doctor warmly, rising at the same time and wiping his brow, for he had suffered agonies while the thing hung in the wind. A refusal, after the scene at noon, would have placed him in a ridiculous light before Anastasie. 'How hot and heavy is the evening, to be sure! I have always had a fancy to be a fish in summer, Jean-Marie, here in the Loing beside Gretz. I should lie under a water-lily and listen to the bells, which must sound most delicately down below. That would be a life—do you not think so, too?'

'Yes,' said Jean-Marie.

'Thank God, you have imagination!' cried the Doctor, embracing the boy with his usual effusive warmth, though it was a proceeding that seemed to disconcert the sufferer almost as much as if he had been an English schoolboy of the same age. 'And now,' he added, 'I will take you to my wife.'

Madame Desprez sat in the dining-room in a cool wrapper.

All the blinds were down, and the tile floor had been recently sprinkled with water ; her eyes were half shut, but she affected to be reading a novel as they entered. Though she was a bustling woman, she enjoyed repose between whiles and had a remarkable appetite for sleep.

The Doctor went through a solemn form of introduction, adding, for the benefit of both parties, ‘ You must try to like each other for my sake.’

‘ He is very pretty,’ said Anastasie. ‘ Will you kiss me, my pretty little fellow ? ’

The Doctor was furious and dragged her into the passage. ‘ Are you a fool, Anastasie ? ’ he said ; ‘ what is all this I hear about the tact of women ? Heaven knows, I have not met with it in my experience. You address my little philosopher as if he were an infant. He must be spoken to with more respect, I tell you ; he must not be kissed and Georgy-porgy’d like an ordinary child.’

‘ I only did it to please you, I am sure,’ replied Anastasie ; ‘ but I will try to do better.’

The Doctor apologised for his warmth. ‘ But I do wish him,’ he continued, ‘ to feel at home among us. And really your conduct was so idiotic, my cherished one, and so utterly and distantly out of place, that a saint might have been pardoned a little vehemence in disapproval. Do, do try—if it is possible for a woman to understand young people—but of course it is not, and I waste my breath. Hold your tongue as much as possible at least, and observe my conduct narrowly ; it will serve you for a model.’

Anastasie did as she was bidden, and considered the Doctor’s behaviour. She observed that he embraced the boy three times in the course of the evening, and managed generally to confound and abash the little fellow out of speech and appetite. But she had the true womanly heroism in little affairs. Not only did she refrain from the cheap revenge of exposing the Doctor’s errors to himself, but she did her best to remove their ill effect on Jean-Marie. When Desprez went out for his last breath of air before retiring for the night, she came over to the boy’s side and took his hand.

‘ You must not be surprised nor frightened by my husband’s manners,’ she said. ‘ He is the kindest of men, but so clever that he is sometimes difficult to understand. You will soon grow used to him, and then you will love him, for that nobody can help. As for me, you may be sure, I shall try to make you happy, and will not bother you at all. I think we should be excellent friends, you

and I. I am not clever, but I am very good-natured. Will you give me a kiss?’

He held up his face, and she took him in her arms and then began to cry. The woman had spoken in complaisance; but she had warmed to her own eloquence, and tenderness followed. The Doctor, entering, found them enlaced: he concluded that his wife was in fault; and he was just beginning, in an awful voice, ‘Anastasia——’; when she looked up at him, smiling, with an upraised finger; and he held his peace, wondering, while she led the boy to his attic.

When the Doctor and his wife were in bed, she put her arms about him very caressingly. ‘Henri,’ she said, ‘my husband, I love your son; I shall love him more every day; you have done wisely and kindly in bringing him, for he will be a great happiness to me; and to love the same person will help us to love each other the more dearly.’

The Doctor was so tenderly affected at these words that he lost countenance; a pricking in his eyes admonished him that weakness was prevailing in the citadel of man; nor did he contend with nature; and this ingenuous couple mingled their tears and kissed each other with the utmost affection.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EDUCATION OF A PHILOSOPHER.

THE installation of the adopted stable-boy was thus happily effected, and the wheels of life continued to run smoothly in the Doctor’s house. Jean-Marie did his horse and carriage duty in the morning; sometimes helped in the housework; sometimes walked abroad with the Doctor, to drink wisdom from the fountain-head; and was introduced at night to the sciences and the dead tongues. He retained his singular placidity of mind and manner; he was rarely in fault; but he made only a very partial progress in his studies, and remained much of a stranger in the family.

The Doctor was a pattern of regularity. All forenoon, he worked on his great book, the ‘Comparative Pharmacopœia, or Historical Dictionary of all Medicines,’ which as yet consisted principally of slips of paper and pins. When finished, it was to fill many personable volumes, and to combine antiquarian interest

with professional utility. But the Doctor was studious of literary graces and the picturesque; an anecdote, a touch of manners, a moral qualification, or a sounding epithet was sure to be preferred before a piece of science; a little more, and he would have written the 'Comparative Pharmacopœia' in verse! The article 'Mummia,' for instance, was already complete, though the remainder of the work had not progressed beyond the letter A. It was exceedingly copious and entertaining, written with quaintness and colour, exact, erudite, a literary article; but it would hardly have afforded guidance to a practising physician of to-day. The feminine good sense of his wife had led her to point this out with uncompromising sincerity; for the Dictionary was duly read aloud to her, betwixt sleep and waking, as it proceeded towards an infinitely distant completion; and the Doctor was a little sore on the subject of mummies, and sometimes resented an allusion with asperity.

After the midday meal and a proper period of digestion, he walked, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by Jean-Marie; for madame would have preferred any hardship rather than walk.

She was, as I have said, a very busy person, continually occupied about material comforts, and ready to drop asleep over a novel the instant she was disengaged. This was the less objectionable, as she never snored or grew distempered in complexion when she slept. On the contrary, she looked the very picture of luxurious and appetising ease, and woke without a start to the perfect possession of her faculties. I am afraid she was greatly an animal, but she was a very nice animal to have about. In this way, she had little to do with Jean-Marie; but the sympathy which had been established between them on the first night remained unbroken; they held occasional conversations, mostly on household matters; to the extreme disappointment of the Doctor, they occasionally sallied off together to that temple of debasing superstition, the village church; madame and he, both in their Sunday's best, drove twice a month to Fontainebleau and returned laden with purchases; and, in short, although the Doctor still continued to regard them as irreconcilably antipathetic, their relation was as intimate, friendly, and confidential as their natures suffered.

I fear, however, that in her heart of hearts, madame kindly despised and pitied the boy. She had no admiration for his class of virtues; she liked a smart, polite, forward, roguish sort of boy, cap in hand, light of foot, meeting the eye; she liked volubility,

charm, a little vice—the promise of a second Doctor Desprez. And it was her indefeasible belief that Jean-Marie was dull. ‘Poor dear boy,’ she had said once, ‘how sad it is that he should be so stupid!’ She had never repeated that remark, for the Doctor had raged like a wild bull, denouncing the brutal bluntness of her mind, bemoaning his own fate to be so unequally mated with an ass, and, what touched Anastasie more nearly, menacing the table china by the fury of his gesticulations. But she adhered silently to her opinion; and when Jean-Marie was sitting, stolid, blank, but not unhappy, over his unfinished tasks, she would snatch her opportunity in the Doctor’s absence, go over to him, put her arms about his neck, lay her cheek to his, and communicate her sympathy with his distress. ‘Do not mind,’ she would say; ‘I, too, am not at all clever, and I can assure you that it makes no difference in life.’

The Doctor’s view was naturally different. That gentleman never wearied of the sound of his own voice, which was, to say the truth, agreeable enough to hear. He now had a listener, who was not so cynically indifferent as Anastasie, and who sometimes put him on his mettle by the most relevant objections. Besides, was he not educating the boy? And education, philosophers are agreed, is the most philosophical of duties. What can be more heavenly to poor mankind than to have one’s hobby grow into a duty to the State? Then, indeed, do the ways of life become ways of pleasantness. Never had the Doctor seen reason to be more content with his endowments. Philosophy flowed smoothly from his lips. He was so agile a dialectician that he could trace his nonsense, when challenged, back to some root in sense, and prove it to be a sort of flower upon his system. He slipped out of antinomies like a fish, and left his disciple marvelling at the rabbi’s depth.

Moreover, deep down in his heart the Doctor was disappointed with the ill-success of his more formal education. A boy, chosen by so acute an observer for his aptitude, and guided along the path of learning by so philosophic an instructor, was bound, by the nature of the universe, to make a more obvious and lasting advance. Now Jean-Marie was slow in all things, impenetrable in others; and his power of forgetting was fully on a level with his power to learn. Therefore the Doctor cherished his peripatetic lectures, to which the boy attended, which he generally appeared to enjoy, and by which he often profited.

Many and many were the talks they had together; and health

and moderation proved the subject of the Doctor's divagations. To these he lovingly returned.

'I lead you,' he would say, 'by the green pastures. My system, my beliefs, my medicines, are resumed in one phrase—to avoid excess. Blessed nature, healthy, temperate nature, abhors and exterminates excess. Human law, in this matter, imitates at a great distance her provisions; and we must strive to supplement the efforts of the law. Yes, boy, we must be a law to ourselves and for our neighbours—*lex armata*—armed, emphatic, tyrannous law. If you see a crapulous human ruin snuffing, dash from him his box! The judge, though in a way an admission of disease, is less offensive to me than either the doctor or the priest. Above all the doctor—the doctor and the purulent trash and garbage of his pharmacopœia! Pure air—from the neighbourhood of a pinetum for the sake of the turpentine—unadulterated wine, and the reflections of an unsophisticated spirit in the presence of the works of nature—these, my boy, are the best medical appliances and the best religious comforts. Devote yourself to these. Hark! there are the bells of Bourron (the wind is in the north, it will be fair). How clear and airy is the sound! The nerves are harmonised and quieted; the mind attuned to silence; and observe how easily and regularly beats the heart! Your unenlightened doctor would see nothing in these sensations; and yet you yourself perceive they are a part of health.—Did you remember your quinine this morning? Good. Quinine also is a work of nature; it is, after all, only the bark of a tree which we might gather for ourselves if we lived in the locality.—What a world is this! Though a professed atheist, I delight to bear my testimony to the world. Look at the gratuitous remedies and pleasures that surround our path! The river runs by the garden end, our bath, our fishpond, our natural system of drainage. There is a well in the court which sends up sparkling water from the earth's very heart, clean, cool, and, with a little wine, most wholesome. The district is notorious for its salubrity; rheumatism is the only prevalent complaint, and I myself have never had a touch of it. I tell you—and my opinion is based upon the coldest, clearest processes of reason—if I, if you, desired to leave this home of pleasures, it would be the duty, it would be the privilege, of our best friend to prevent us with a pistol bullet.'

One beautiful June day they sat upon the hill outside the village. The river, as blue as heaven, shone here and there among the foliage. The indefatigable birds turned and flickered

about Gretz church tower. A healthy wind blew from over the forest, and the sound of innumerable thousands of tree-tops and innumerable millions on millions of green leaves was abroad in the air, and filled the ear with something between whispered speech and singing. It seemed as if every blade of grass must hide a cigale; and the fields rang merrily with their music, jingling far and near as with the sleigh-bells of the fairy queen. From their station on the slope the eye embraced a large space of poplar'd plain upon the one hand, the waving hill-tops of the forest on the other, and Gretz itself in the middle, a handful of roofs. Under the bestriding arch of the blue heavens, the place seemed dwindled to a toy. It seemed incredible that people dwelt, and could find room to turn or air to breathe, in such a corner of the world. The thought came home to the boy, perhaps for the first time, and he gave it words.

‘How small it looks!’ he sighed.

‘Ay,’ replied the Doctor, ‘small enough now. Yet it was once a walled city; thriving, full of furred burgesses and men in armour, humming with affairs;—with tall spires, for aught that I know, and portly towers along the battlements. A thousand chimneys ceased smoking at the curfew bell. There were gibbets at the gate as thick as scarecrows. In time of war, the assault swarmed against it with ladders, the arrows fell like leaves, the defenders sallied hotly over the drawbridge, each side uttered its cry as they plied their weapons. Do you know that the walls extended as far as the Commanderie? Tradition so reports. Alas, what a long way off is all this confusion—nothing left of it but my quiet words spoken in your ear—and the town itself shrunk to the hamlet underneath us! By-and-by came the English wars—you shall hear more of the English, a stupid people, who sometimes blundered into good—and Gretz was taken, sacked, and burned. It is the history of many towns; but Gretz never rose again; it was never rebuilt; its ruins were a quarry to serve the growth of rivals; and the stones of Gretz are now erect along the streets of Nemours. It gratifies me that our old house was the first to rise after the calamity; when the town had come to an end, it inaugurated the hamlet.’

‘I, too, am glad of that,’ said Jean-Marie.

‘It should be the temple of the humbler virtues,’ responded the Doctor with a savoury gusto. ‘Perhaps one of the reasons why I love my little hamlet as I do, is that we have a similar history, she and I. Have I told you that I was once rich?’

'I do not think so,' answered Jean-Marie. 'I do not think I should have forgotten. I am sorry you should have lost your fortune.'

'Sorry?' cried the Doctor. 'Why I find I have scarce begun your education after all. Listen to me! Would you rather live in the old Gretz or in the new, free from alarms of war, with the green country at the door, without noise, passports, the exactions of the soldiery, or the jangle of the curfew bell to send us off to bed by sundown?'

'I suppose I should prefer the new,' replied the boy.

'Precisely,' returned the Doctor; 'so do I. And, in the same way, I prefer my present moderate fortune to my former wealth. Golden mediocrity! cried the adorable ancients; and I subscribe to their enthusiasm. Have I not good wine, good food, good air, the fields and the forest for my walk, a house, an admirable wife, a boy whom I protest I cherish like a son? Now, if I were still rich, I should indubitably make my residence in Paris—you know Paris—Paris and Paradise are not convertible terms. This pleasant noise of the wind streaming among leaves changed into the grinding Babel of the street, the stupid glare of plaster substituted for this quiet pattern of greens and greys, the nerves shattered, the digestion falsified—picture the fall! Already you perceive the consequences; the mind is stimulated, the heart steps to a different measure, and the man is himself no longer. I have passionately studied myself—the true business of philosophy. I know my character as the musician knows the ventages of his flute. Should I return to Paris, I should ruin myself gambling; nay, I go further—I should break the heart of my Anastasie with infidelities.'

This was too much for Jean-Marie. That a place should so transform the most excellent of men transcended his belief. Paris, he protested, was even an agreeable place of residence. 'Nor when I lived in that city did I feel much difference,' he pleaded.

'What!' cried the Doctor. 'Did you not steal when you were there?'

But the boy could never be brought to see that he had done anything wrong when he stole. Nor, indeed, did the Doctor think he had; but that gentleman was never very scrupulous when in want of a retort.

'And now,' he concluded, 'do you begin to understand? My only friends were those who ruined me. Gretz has been my

academy, my sanatorium, my heaven of innocent pleasures. If millions are offered me, I wave them back: *Retro, Sathanas!*—Evil one, begone! Fix your mind on my example; despise riches, avoid the debasing influence of cities. Hygiene—hygiene and mediocrity of fortune—these be your watchwords during life!’

If this was the first, it was not by any means the last, conversation on the subject; Jean-Marie drank the doctrine in. The Doctor’s system of hygiene strikingly coincided with his tastes; and his picture of the perfect life was a faithful description of the one he was leading at the time. But it is easy to convince a boy, whom you supply with all the facts for the discussion. And besides, there was one thing admirable in the philosophy, and that was the enthusiasm of the philosopher. There was never any one more vigorously determined to be pleased; and if he was not a great logician, and so had no right to convince the intellect, he was certainly something of a poet, and had a fascination to seduce the heart. What he could not achieve in his customary humour of a radiant admiration of himself and his circumstances, he sometimes effected in his fits of gloom.

‘Boy,’ he would say, ‘avoid me to-day. If I were superstitious, I should even beg for an interest in your prayers. I am in the black fit; the evil spirit of King Saul, the hag of the merchant Abudah, the personal devil of the mediæval monk, is with me—is in me,’ tapping on his breast. ‘The vices of my nature are now uppermost; innocent pleasures woo me in vain; I long for Paris, for my wallowing in the mire. See,’ he would continue, producing a handful of silver, ‘I denude myself, I am not to be trusted with the price of a fare. Take it, keep it for me, squander it on deleterious candy, throw it in the deepest of the river—I will homologate your action. Save me from that part of myself which I disown. If you see me falter, do not hesitate: if necessary, wreck the train! I speak, of course, by a parable. Any extremity were better than for me to reach Paris alive.’

Doubtless the Doctor enjoyed these little scenes, as a variation in his part; they represented the Byronic element in the somewhat artificial poetry of his existence; but to the boy, though he was dimly aware of their theatricality, they represented more. The Doctor made perhaps too little, the boy possibly too much, of the reality and gravity of these temptations.

One day a great light shone for Jean-Marie. 'Could not riches be used well?' he asked.

'In theory, yes,' replied the Doctor. 'But it is found in experience that no one does so. All the world imagine they will be exceptional when they grow wealthy; but possession is debasing, new desires spring up; and the silly taste for ostentation eats out the heart of pleasure.'

'Then you might be better if you had less,' said the boy.

'Certainly not,' replied the Doctor; but his voice quavered as he spoke.

'Why?' demanded pitiless innocence.

Doctor Desprez saw all the colours of the rainbow in a moment; the stable universe appeared to be about capsizing with him. 'Because,' said he—affecting deliberation after an obvious pause—'because I have formed my life for my present income. It is not good for men of my years to be violently dissevered from their habits.'

That was a sharp brush. The Doctor breathed hard, and fell into taciturnity for the afternoon. As for the boy, he was delighted with the resolution of his doubts; even wondered that he had not foreseen the obvious and conclusive answer. His faith in the Doctor was a stout piece of goods. Desprez was inclined to be a sheet in the wind's eye after dinner, especially after Rhone wine, his favourite weakness. He would remark on the warmth of his feeling for Anastasie, and with inflamed cheeks and a loose, flustered smile, debate upon all sorts of topics, and be feebly and indiscreetly witty. But the adopted stable-boy would not permit himself to entertain a doubt that savoured of ingratitude. It is quite true that a man may be a second father to you, and yet take too much to drink; but the best natures are ever slow to accept such truths.

The Doctor thoroughly possessed his heart, but perhaps he exaggerated his influence over his mind. Certainly Jean-Marie adopted some of his master's opinions, but I have yet to learn that he ever surrendered one of his own. Convictions existed in him by divine right; they were virgin, unwrought, the brute metal of decision. He could add others indeed, but he could not put away; neither did he care if they were perfectly agreed among themselves; and his spiritual pleasures had nothing to do with turning them over or justifying them in words. Words were with him a mere accomplishment, like dancing. When he was by himself, his pleasures were almost vegetable. He would slip into

the woods towards Achères, and sit in the mouth of a cave among grey birches. His soul stared straight out of his eyes; he did not move or think; sunlight, thin shadows moving in the wind, the edge of firs against the sky, occupied and bound his faculties. He was pure unity, a spirit wholly abstracted. A single mood filled him, to which all the objects of sense contributed, as the colours of the spectrum merge and disappear in white light.

So while the Doctor made himself drunk with words, the adopted stable-boy bemused himself with silence.

R. L. STEVENSON.

(To be concluded in May.)

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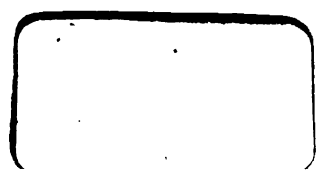
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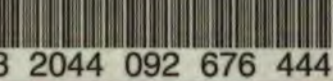
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